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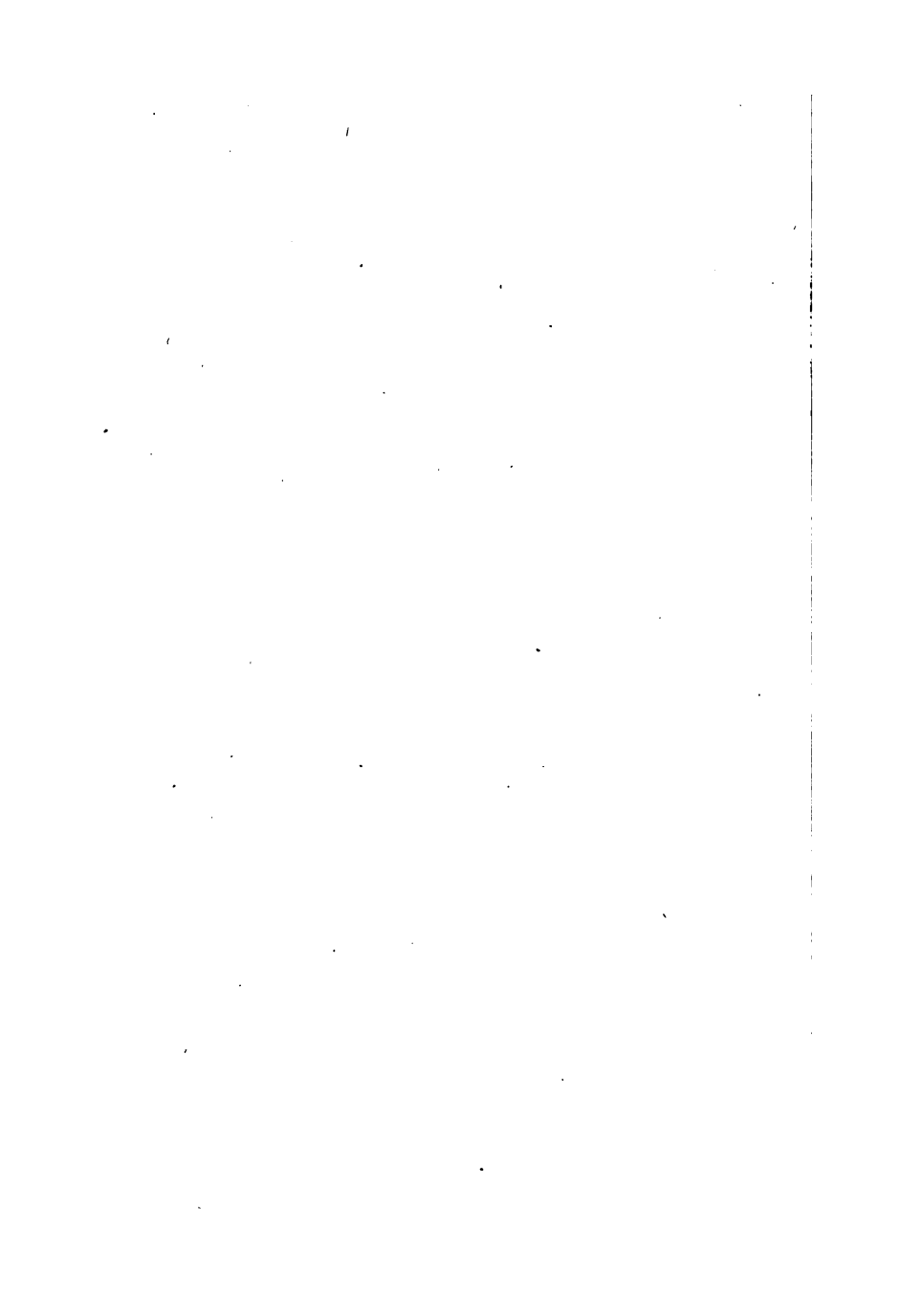
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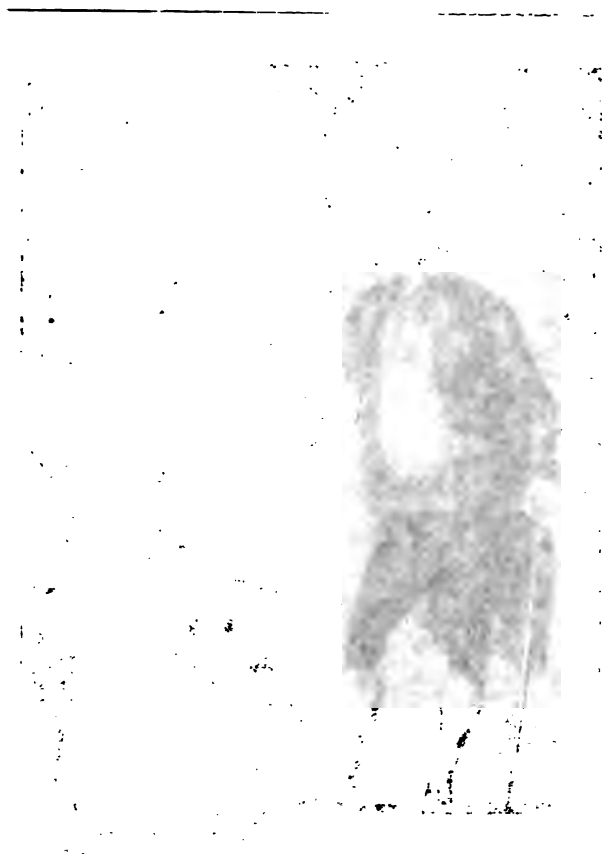


MRS. ANDERSON'S SCHOOL.



MARGARET AND THE GARDENER.





SOME RECOLLECTIONS

OF

MRS ANDERSON'S SCHOOL



ARTHUR HALL, VIRTUE & CO
PATERNOSTER ROW.

RECOLLECTIONS
OF
MRS. ANDERSON'S SCHOOL.

A Book for Girls.

BY

JANE M. WINNARD.



"Children are blest and powerful ; their world lies
More justly balanced, partly at their feet
And part far from them."—WORDSWORTH.

"Wer fertig ist, dem ist nichts recht zu machen ;
Ein Werdender wird immer dankbar seyn."—GOETHE.

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PREFACE.

As the following story is intended for the amusement of young people, not one word about systems of education will be found in it. The little I have to say on that head will be said here, in the Preface; because girls and boys do not read Prefaces, and parents and guardians do.

In these days of general enlightenment, when new and improved modes of Female Education are being tried in all quarters of the British empire, with more or less faith in the result,—when Ladies' Colleges, various systems of Home Training, and other “aids to development,” have established their superiority over the old Boarding-schools for Young Ladies, and driven

them towards the vast limbo of bygone things, it is somewhat bold for a simple individual, personally unconcerned in the matter, to say a word in favour of the old fashion. But it shall be said, nevertheless.

There are good boarding-schools for girls, as well as bad ones—schools conducted by women who are not mean, grasping, vulgar-minded, and ignorant (as, I fear, too many schoolmistresses are); but generous, large-hearted, highly-educated gentlewomen. The lives of these women are often full of noble, touching lessons, which great ladies who neither toil nor spin would do well to get by heart when they come in their way. The life of many a schoolmistress is one steady course of industry and self-sacrifice for the good of others; and the influence of such a person over the young is always beneficial. Women of this kind think of something beyond

half-yearly bills when they take charge of a pupil (and are sometimes defrauded of their well-earned money, in consequence); they educate her according to their knowledge and ability, and take a real interest in her character and future life. Until the middle classes get a better-educated race of mothers than they have at present, the occupation of such women will not be gone, it seems to me. The great want in Female Education, as in the rearing of great men, is a want of well-educated mothers. Girls ought to be trained to be mothers. They should be made to understand early the dignity and sanctity of the maternal life. They ought to be taught that women (except here and there one) have no higher duty in this world than

——— “ to rear, to teach,
Becoming as is meet and fit,
A link among the days to knit
The generations each with each.”

This is a woman's proper task—perhaps it is above all her other work. To fulfil this, she requires high moral and intellectual culture—a finely-balanced conscience, a steady will, knowledge and skill, taste and judgment. She must also keep alive within her the habit of self-improvement—bearing in mind that she will not always be the nurse of babes and the teacher of little children, but that she may live to be the mother of grown men and women; and that, for the sake of being their companion and friend (if for no higher reason), she must not let her best faculties grow inert, or keep them always tethered down to the small necessities of the household. Girls who have such a mother are blessed indeed; they are sure to be well educated—educated so as to be worthy to rear immortal beings in their turn.

But society cannot be endowed with good

mothers as soon as it perceives its deficiency in that particular; it must do the best it can to produce them for future generations. In the meantime the influence of a cultivated, high-minded mother, and the warm, invigorating atmosphere which she (the household sun) creates around her, will be but poorly supplied in the best school. Still, we cannot help thinking that the generality of girls (under sixteen) would be quite as well off for moral and religious training, and rather better off for intellectual discipline, in such a school, than they would be in running about from one lecture to another at a college, without the special direction of a competent mother; or than they would be under a scrambling, careless, inefficient system of education at home, where an ill-regulated family is presided over by bickering, discordant parents, and where a governess is engaged, not to educate

the children under the mother's direction, but to do so under her *espionnage*—the painfully suspicious *espionnage*—of an intensely interested, but consciously incompetent ruler. Surely a select and well-constituted school, managed by such a mistress as I have described, would in most cases be better for a girl than such a home-education. It is not the best state of things, certainly, but it may lead to a better one than the present.

I have another word to say on the subject of the Ladies' Colleges—institutions which appear to me calculated to produce great and lasting benefit to the country. It is only under the direction of good mothers—and, failing them, of good governesses—that lectures at a college, or any where else, can really be beneficial to very young girls. To young women whose school-room education is finished, and who are earnestly

desirous of acquiring knowledge, lectures by accomplished professors are of real value; they are no longer children, and may be safely left to pursue their studies by themselves; but little girls are not the sort of students to learn much from academic lectures. This is, I find, the opinion of many professors at the colleges already established: and new arrangements and limitations with regard to age are being made in consequence, which will facilitate the good work to be achieved by these institutions.

Although this little book attempts to give a truthful idea of life in a good school, the whole is fictitious, nothing in it being copied from real life except the name and uses of the "Grey Room" and the sketch of Inez Olivarez, which was suggested by a Portuguese girl whom I knew at school. It was written some years ago, when school-days were fresher in my memory

than they are now ; but I cannot say that my respect for the feelings and aspirations of that little world is very much diminished by an increased acquaintance with this great world and its ways.

J. M. W.

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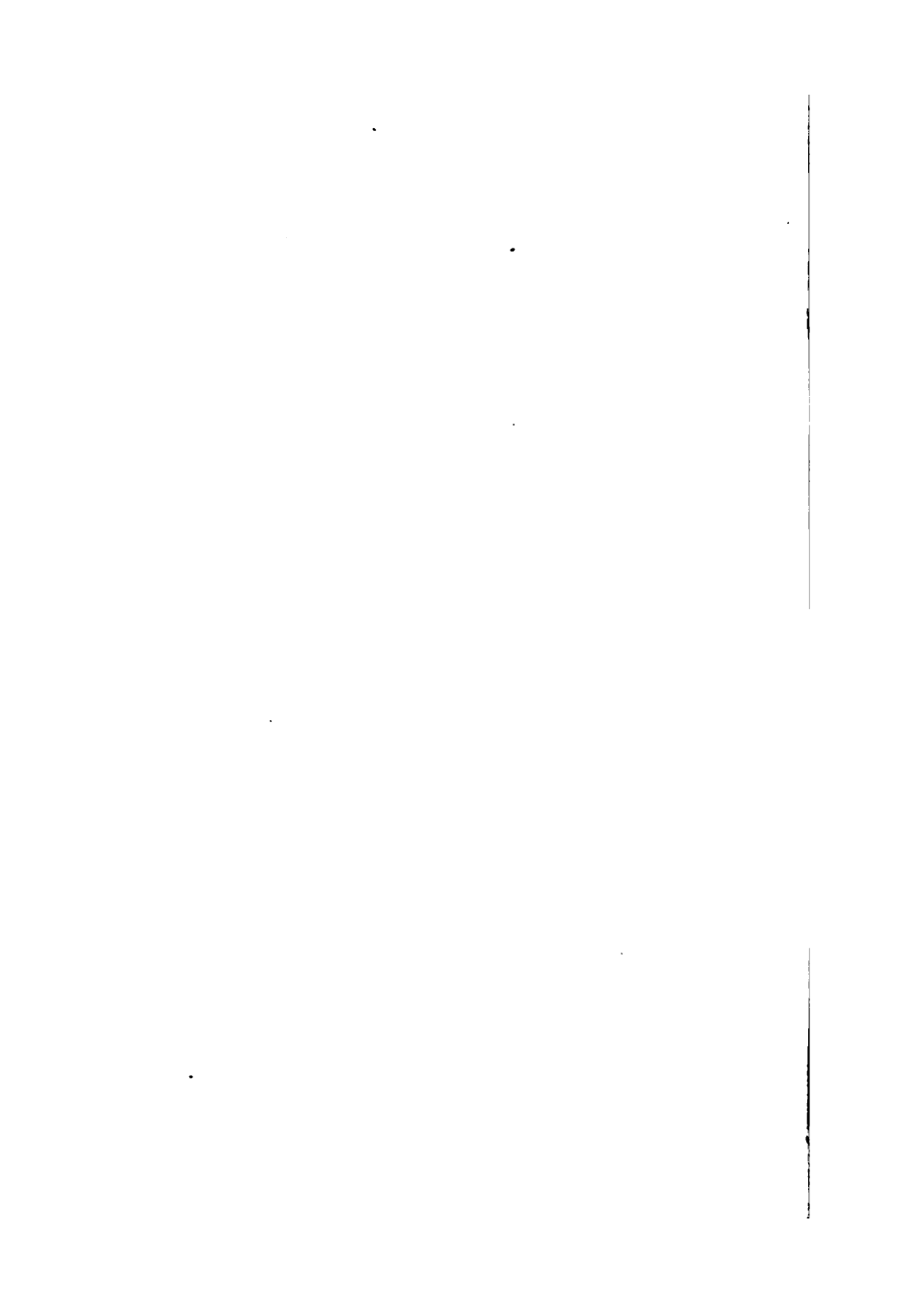
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RECOLLECTIONS
OF
MRS. ANDERSON'S SCHOOL.

CHAPTER I.

MY FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL.

THE manifold evil of Boarding-schools for Young Ladies has been so frequently discussed, and is now so generally recognised, that I almost despair of being believed when I declare that Mrs. Anderson's establishment at * * * was really excellent. As I was a pupil there for five years (from the age of twelve to that of seventeen), it can scarcely be denied that I ought to know something of the matter. I must confess that my school-days were happy; and what is more, that I thought so while they lasted. Most

of the girls were amiable and well-disposed ; two of them were, then, and still are, my dearest friends. The teachers were, in general, sweet-tempered, patient, and clever ; and as to Mrs. Anderson herself, she was just what a school-mistress ought to be,—a mixture of firmness, gentleness, cheerfulness, and good sense.

How well I remember first going to school ! As the carriage entered the gate and drove up the formal avenue, I looked out eagerly, and was struck with the novelty of all I saw. It was so unlike our own cheerful-looking home ! The trees were cut into odd forms ; I saw no flowers ; and the grass plats were surrounded by low iron rails, indicating that little girls were not allowed to run or lie on them. Then the house displeased me. It was large, old, built of red brick, with no balconies, verandahs, or pretty ornaments of any kind ; and there was an ugly little belfry at one end of the roof, which I did not like, at all. The only thing which I *did* like, was a pretty little arched window, at one side of the house, which was half hidden by honeysuckle and

clematis. There were two peacocks, too, moving slowly in front of the house door, that I considered redeeming points amid the surrounding ugliness.

A strange feeling of coldness came over me as I waited, with my mamma, in the drawing-room of Avenue House until Mrs. Anderson should make her appearance. I had been told, a hundred times, that she was kind and gentle, and mamma's oldest friend; but still I had never seen her, and she was a school-mistress. How my heart palpitated when the door opened, and Mrs. Anderson entered! And then, how different she was from what I had expected! She was certainly very tall and dignified, but then it was so very unlike the tallness and dignity I had pictured to myself. Besides, she had mild, blue eyes, instead of piercing, commanding black ones; her nose was not in the least sharp or aquiline; on the contrary, it was short and round, like the rest of her face. Her joyful, affectionate manner, as she embraced mamma, quite re-assured me, and I felt that I should love her very soon. At length she turned her attention to me; examined my coun-

tenance attentively, and then smiled at mamma, as if the examination had satisfied her, saying, "How much she is like what you were at twelve years old!" That pleased me, for I had often heard that mamma had been a very pretty little girl.

"And so you mean to leave her with me, while you and the Major go to India?" asked Mrs. Anderson, looking affectionately from mamma to me.

"Yes, if you will undertake the charge, Mary. I bring her *now* that she may get accustomed to school, and learn to love you, before papa and I leave England."

As mamma said these words, the tears almost came into my eyes, and I asked, "But I am to go home again before you and papa sail?"

"Surely, my darling," cried mamma, pressing me to her, with more than usual fondness. "I only wish you to remain here, now, because papa and I shall be very busy with preparations for our voyage during the next week or two; if you were to be at home, we could see but very little of you,

and therefore we think it better that you should come here and learn something of your new mode of life. As soon as we have more leisure, papa and I shall only be too glad to have our own sweet Meg again, to stay with us until we sail."

To grown-up people, all this must have seemed very reasonable;—not so to me;—I thought it very hard that I could not be allowed to stay with my parents during the bustle and confusion attendant upon giving up house-keeping, and preparing for a year's sojourn in India, whither my papa (a major in the then king's troops) was obliged to go upon some important military business. I was not otherwise an unreasonable child. I did not cry because I was not to go to India with them; but I did think it rather unkind of mamma to send me away from her, on any account, now that we were to be separated for so long a time. Of course I did not understand that mamma was really sacrificing her own greatest pleasure (the daily sight of her only child), for the good of that child, who, she justly supposed would suffer less when her parents left the

country, if she had learned to know and to like the household in which she was to reside.

I suppose that my countenance betrayed my feelings; for Mrs. Anderson took me kindly by the hand, and putting back my hair from off my face, looked steadily but affectionately into my eyes, and said, "My dear little Margaret, you must not fancy that it is a very terrible thing to come to school and live with me."

"No, ma'am;—but to leave mamma,"—I faltered.

"That is an evil, certainly; but as it cannot be avoided, as papa and mamma think it best to choose this little evil out of others that are greater, Margaret Granby will bear it bravely and cheerfully, I am sure, if it were only to avoid giving mamma unnecessary anxiety. If Margaret does this, she will be like her mamma in mind as well as in face."

These words produced a great effect on me. There was something so gentle yet so steady—so affectionate and yet so reasonable—in Mrs. Anderson's manner, that I felt at once her

ascendancy over me. From that moment Mrs. Anderson's good opinion became necessary to my happiness. I wanted to make her love me as she used to love my mamma ; for to be as good, as wise, and as clever as mamma, was the height of my ambition.

Impelled by an irresistible inclination, I put my arms round Mrs. Anderson's neck, and she gave me a sweet kiss. I then turned to kiss mamma, and said that I was quite sure I should be happy there. This pleased them both, and I remember mamma laughed in her sweet way, and shaking her head at Mrs. Anderson, she said, "Ah ! I see, Mary, you have lost none of your old tricks ; you win every heart, just as you did twenty years ago. Pray what is the use of your keeping a school ? You have not got your heart petrified yet, in spite of your fear." I looked at Mrs. Anderson curiously. How dreadful, I thought, must be a disease that is likely to turn the heart into stone ! It was some days before I was assured that Mrs. Anderson was not suffering from a painful disease of the heart. The reader

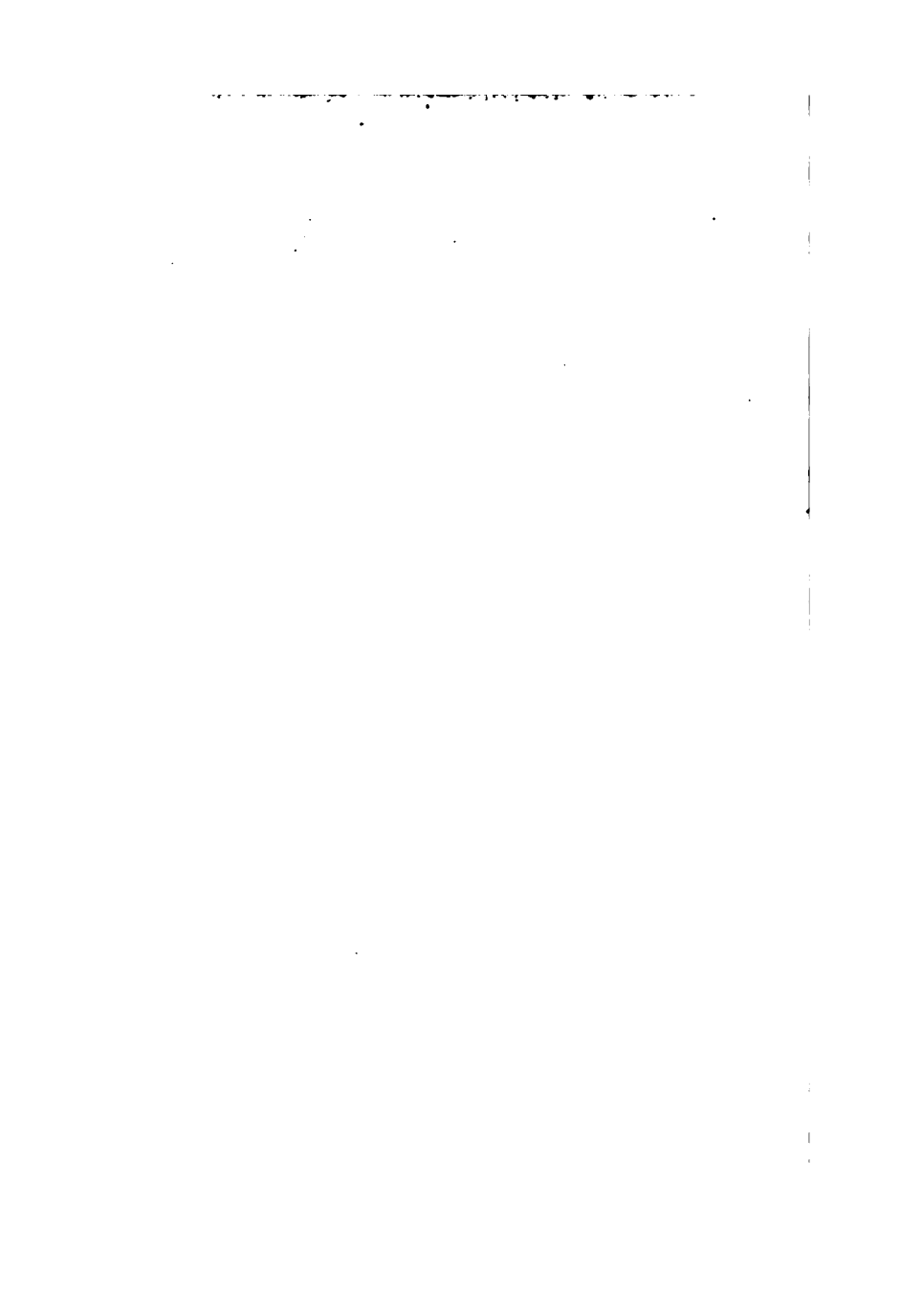
will perceive, by this mistake of mine, that I was not a clever child, but always took things literally.

Avenue House, or, as the gardener was pleased to call it, *Have a new house*, as the name intimates, was approached by an avenue of trees, and stood in the midst of an extensive old-fashioned garden. This avenue and garden attracted my attention as I looked out of the window while mamma and Mrs. Anderson were talking. Presently one of the two peacocks came to the window, and spread his beautiful tail.

“Oh, mamma; mamma, may I go into the garden?” Permission was given, and in a moment I was trying to make friends with the bird. I was devotedly fond of animals, and could not bear to part from my little menagerie at home, so mamma was to ask Mrs. Anderson to let me have my Italian greyhound, *Fani*, and my squirrel, *Jacko*, and *Goldee*, my sweet little canary bird, all at school with me. If this request were granted I thought I should not so much mind having my pony and the dear



THE PET OF THE PLAY-GROUND.



little doves and rabbits sold. Mrs. Anderson very kindly allowed me to have my pets with me, because, as she said, her house was to be home, as well as school, to me, while papa and mamma were away.

At last the time came for mamma to go—the carriage was at the door—

“Some natural tears I shed, but wiped them soon.”

This was not to be a long separation, and papa was to come and see me in three days; therefore I stood with my hand in Mrs. Anderson's on the lawn, and watched the carriage with tolerable composure, and when mamma waved her handkerchief to me, just as it turned out at the gate, I returned the salutation with great energy.

Then came my first visit to the school-room. How strange and bewildered was my feeling in the midst of that room full of girls! When Mrs. Anderson led me into it, it was not school-time, and the girls were all talking and amusing themselves in different parts of the room. The noise was considerable; but it gradually ceased when

the governess with "*a new girl*" made her appearance. I stood abashed and awkward, feeling that twenty pairs of eyes were all on me at once, and wishing, most heartily, that mamma were not gone, or that I could run after her. But there was no escape, and impossible as it seemed, I *must* get accustomed to all those strangers.

Mrs. Anderson called "Rose Wilson," and a cheerful looking girl, apparently about two years older than myself, advanced.

"Rose, my dear, I give my little friend here into your charge, to initiate her into our mode of living. Take her over the house, and do all that you can to make her forget we are strangers to her. She is to sleep in the little white room, and you are to sleep there also."

Rose smiled, and took my hand. How reluctantly I left Mrs. Anderson's side! She seemed to bear about her the last faint reflection of the light of home, for I had last seen mamma talking with her. Yet there was no help for it, so I was obliged to go from her and follow my new guide. She led me into a corner at the

farther end of the room, and we sat down together, on a form. Mrs. Anderson soon retired; and when the twenty pairs of eyes had looked at me, some with broad stares, others with furtive glances, until the first edge of girlish curiosity was blunted, the noise gradually recommenced, and my companion began to speak to me.

"How do you like coming to school?"

"I do not know, yet. I never was at school before."

"Never at school before? Why, how old are you?"

"I was twelve the third of last May."

"Oh, then, I suppose you have had a governess at home?"

"No, I never had a governess. Mamma taught me."

A pause—during which Miss Wilson looked as if she fancied I must be very ignorant, and I looked as if it were not the case. Nor was it; as I certainly did great credit to maternal instruction. Perhaps I excelled the more, that I was anxious to prove to every one that it was quite

possible to learn grammar, history, and geography as well at home as at school, and that my mamma took as much pains, and was as able to teach, as the best governess in the world.

“ I suppose you feel rather dull at first coming to school ? ” enquired Rose Wilson.

“ Yes,” and a little sigh, was the answer.

Then Rose put her arm gently round my waist, and said, with a face beaming with kindness,

“ Never mind, dear, you will soon get over that. I thought when I first came to school that I should never be happy, but I soon found I was mistaken. You will like nearly all the girls ; and as to Mrs. Anderson, you will adore her. And Miss Stuart is very kind, although she is obliged to be strict, you know ; and Madame d’Almette will let you do whatever you like provided your French lesson is well prepared.”

“ Who is that pretty little girl playing at ball there ? ”

“ Oh, that is my little sister. Do you think she is pretty ? ”

"Oh, yes, very. Do call her here, and let me speak to her."

"Grace; Grace, dear;" cried Rose Wilson, "come here."

Grace was not a shy child, and came directly. She was a lovely little black-eyed girl, of about seven years old, with soft curly dark hair and a very animated expression. I was as fond of little children as I was of animals, and when I had prevailed on Grace to sit on my lap I forgot that I was in a strange place. Presently I heard the great bell ring, and Rose Wilson told me that we were all going to tea, now. I observed all the young ladies hastening from the room, and we followed them, Grace holding my hand while I linked my arm in that of Rose.

When we arrived in the tea-room (which was one appropriated to meals only), I stared in utter astonishment at the two long tables, spread with white cloths, and surrounded by young ladies ranged on forms. Before each girl was a white china mug with a gold rim round the top, of rather larger dimensions than the well-remem-

bered one from which I used to drink milk, in the nursery, at home. These mugs were filled, some with weak tea, and some with milk, according to the taste of the owner. On each table were placed three plates of bread and butter, cut as hot buttered toast is generally cut; that is to say, a loaf is cut in slices rather less than half-an-inch thick, and these slices are afterwards cut into quarters. It appeared to me that the young ladies could not possibly eat all that bread and butter; but I found out my mistake, for the plates were soon emptied, and the bell was rung for more. At the head of one of these tables sat Mrs. Anderson; before her was an ordinary tea equipage, and she made the tea for herself and the teachers, and such of the young ladies as preferred tea to milk. At the other end of her table sat Miss Crawford, the music teacher. At the two ends of the other table sat Miss Stuart and Madame d'Almette, the English and French teachers. These three ladies, I was given to understand by my new friend, Rose Wilson, were recent arrivals in the establishment, and parties

ran high among the girls, on the subject of their respective merits. She herself preferred Miss Stuart, "because she was so very clever, and Mrs. Anderson seemed to respect her so much. It was a pity she was so very plain. Miss Crawford was pretty enough, but she seemed a conceited, cross thing;" but, as for Madame d'Almette—she was "a dear creature, quite a love; only she was so strict about their verbs."

This information, together with many more minute particulars concerning all the elder girls, did Rose contrive to give me before we went to bed. Just before we retired for the night, the school-room was cleared of books, slates, work-boxes; everything was put into its place, and the forms were ranged against the walls; every young lady took her own place, and a messenger was sent into the parlour to inform Mrs. Anderson that we were ready for prayers. The bell was then rung for the servants, and when all were assembled, Mrs. Anderson read a chapter from the Bible, and afterwards a prayer, in which we all joined, in silence, on

our knees. On this first night, as on every other, while I was at school, my thoughts turned with affectionate solicitude to my parents. I am quite sure that, to many of us, this regular morning and evening prayer was not a mere tedious form;—although to the rest I believe it was. After prayers we each went up to Mrs. Anderson to kiss her and wish her “good night.”

I did not quite like “the little white room” at first. I had just come from my own sweet bedroom, with its carpet, and writing-table, and pretty toilette, and a hundred trifles which could not be given to every girl in a school.

“How do you like this room?” asked Rose.

“Why, I do not like it much; there is no carpet, and no curtains to the window—no long curtains, I mean—and the paper is ugly and old, and”—

“Ah, I see,” interrupted Rose; “you have been accustomed to a very pretty bedroom at home. Come, you must tell me all about your home,—will you?”

“Oh, yes!” cried I, joyfully, and I was be-

ginning an animated description of Granby Lodge, when Rose reminded me that I must undress ; for that "we were only allowed half-an-hour at night, and three quarters of an hour in the morning."—"Wait till we are in bed, and Madame has taken our candle, and then you can tell me all." I did as she said ;—and I forgot that I was at school in talking about my home. This lasted until we both fell asleep.

CHAPTER II.

LAZY LAURA AND KATE MURRAY.

I do not intend to give a regular chronological account of my school life. Indeed, as I remained with Mrs. Anderson five years (owing to the unexpected detention of my parents in India), such an account would, necessarily, be monotonous. Life, in a school, affords no striking adventures or moving accidents, yet it is not altogether devoid of interest or of entertainment. Some of my readers will perhaps peruse this little book with pleasure, because it may recall their own school days; and those who have never been to school may be curious to hear how school-girls pass their time.

I had always been accustomed to early rising, so that getting up at six o'clock was not a trouble ;

but to dress in three-quarters of an hour, *that* I could not accomplish at first; for I had been accustomed to be dressed by mamma's maid. I complained of the inconvenience of dressing myself; but my companions, instead of pitying, laughed at me;—and, for a long time, I was called “the helpless young lady.” This was very unpleasant to me. I, who had always been petted, to be laughed at! Indeed it made me quite unhappy, for a few days; however, I bore all raillery about that and other things without getting into a passion; therefore I soon became a favourite, and after a few months nobody laughed at that “good-natured thing, Margaret Granby.” At one period I was rendered uncomfortable by a careless or ill-natured report of one of the girls, that I was very proud because my family was good and my papa was a distinguished officer, and that I looked down with contempt upon one or two girls in the school whose parents were manufacturers, or engaged in some sort of trade. Now, it was true that I disliked the manners and style of thought of those very girls; but I should have liked them

no better had their parents been noble; they were always boasting of the wealth and expenditure of their families. This was, to me, very disgusting, especially as it was generally done for the purpose of mortifying some poor girl whose friends were far from wealthy. And I confess that once, in a fit of indignation on the subject, I said more than was kind or proper about vulgar, purse-proud *parvenus*, who were so anxious to make their gentility oppressive to such as might not have so much money, but who had far more refinement of mind and manner. "Did it follow because Mrs. B. came in a handsome carriage, to see her daughters, and Mrs. A. came by the omnibus to the end of the road, and was obliged to walk up to the house, to see hers,—did it follow, as a necessary consequence, that Mrs. A. was not *a lady* in the true sense of the word, or that Mrs. B. was? I could form some opinion, for I had seen both ladies, in this house, and in their own homes, to which I had accompanied Mrs. Anderson, in the holidays; and, whatever might be the fortune of Mrs. B., she was far inferior in

all that marks the gentlewoman to Mrs. A.” This speech of mine made me many enemies, but it was the cause of a sincere affection between me and one of the girls, the daughter of a lady who had lost wealth and station by the death of her husband.

The Great Bell was a subject of dispute among the girls. Those who liked it, asserted that the bell had a cheerful sound, and that it was aristocratic to be summoned to meals by it ; the other party, on the contrary, asserted that it was doleful to hear, and that it was “ just like being common workmen ” to be called to meals by a bell.

However, no one ever gave the poor bell so many angry words and disparaging epithets as Laura Harrington, otherwise known among us as “ Lazy Laura.” As soon as the bell sounded at six o'clock in the morning, Laura would begin a low inarticulate grumbling ; this became gradually louder and more distinct, being generally accompanied with impatient plunges about her bed, while her head was carefully kept under the clothes. At the end of a quarter of an hour's

grumbling and plunging, Laura would venture to look out, and on seeing her two companions in the bed-room, half dressed, she would inquire angrily "*why* they got up so soon?"

"Soon, Laura!—why it is a quarter-of-an-hour since the bell rang."

Whereupon Laura would begin—"Oh that tiresome, nasty, stupid, old bell! I am sure it rang too soon this morning—it cannot be six o'clock yet; I have not been asleep more than an hour, I'm sure! I shall not get up yet! I hate the bell! I wish it would fall down!" &c. &c.

By the time she had given vent to her anger at being obliged to get up, it was generally time for her to go down stairs, and she was still in her night-dress; in which, indeed, it is probable she might have remained all day, but for the timely assistance of a friend. Poor Laura! I can see her now, with her large blue eyes half shut, her hair hanging deplorably about her long heavy face; her listless figure constantly drooping forward, and her frock always falling off her left shoulder. Oh Laura Harrington! dear Lazy

Laura! If ever a good-natured, odd, sleepy, indolent girl lounged through that busy school-life, you were she! Now that you have gone back to your own dear Jamaica, may you have no more "abominable bells" to disturb you; and may you be as idle as your heart can desire! for active to any useful purpose you surely never could be.

A striking contrast to Laura was her "very particular friend," Kate Murray. At the first sound of the morning bell it was Kate's wont to start up in bed and jump immediately to the middle of the floor, where after cutting a caper, or making a *pirouette*, she would settle down and put on her shoes and stockings, and then proceed to the other parts of her toilette with a silent energetic rapidity quite edifying to behold. No one could get Kate to converse while she was dressing; it was a business to be got through without trifling; for was there not Laura to be dressed, as well as herself, in the three-quarters of an hour allotted to us?

As Kate observed, "Laura would never be

dressed *at all* if she had not some one to help her. Mrs. Anderson would always be displeased with her, and then poor Laura would cry herself into a consumption!" In order to avoid this melancholy catastrophe, Kate became a sort of guardian angel to Laura. By her aid, Laura was dressed and undressed; it was Kate who carried her through the business of the day, reminding her of every duty, helping her with her lessons, exercises, drawing, music;—in short, Kate, was indispensable to Laura's school existence.

In school time such snatches of dialogue as the following might frequently be overheard.

Kate. Come, don't you know that lesson yet, Laura?

Laura. Very nearly.

Kate. Well, I told you, you could only have twenty minutes for it. Now *do* be quick, there's a dear industrious girl! or I shall not have time to hear you say it over before I go to the French class.

Laura. Oh! never mind hearing me to-day, Kitty; I will be sure to know it. .

Kate. Yes, I dare say! just as if I could trust you to yourself! There, go on again as fast as you can; for Miss Stuart is in a very particular humour this morning, and will not pass over anything, I can tell you that.

Laura would then bury her head in her book, and gabble inarticulately for several minutes with surprising vigour. Then a whispered admonition would come.

Kate. Laura, dear! do take your arms off the table, and put your frock on your shoulder, and sit a little more upright; for there is Miss Stuart looking at you.

Laura. Well! Let her look!

Kate. Nonsense! You will have a mark for *mal tenue*, and you had one yesterday, and one the day before, and then what will Mrs. Anderson say at the end of the week?

Laura. I do not care. When I was at home, in Jamaica——

Kate. Oh! never mind about Jamaica, now. Let me hear if you know that lesson.

Laura would begin to repeat the lesson. In the

midst of it the French teacher's voice would be heard calling for "La première classe de Français."

Kate. There, Laura! I told you so! Come, be quick. I cannot keep Madame waiting for me. What are the other chief towns on the Danube?

Laura. Oh! oh!—*now* I know!—Hamburgh and Berlin.

Kate. Oh Laura! After all this time! What shall I do with you? In five minutes more, Miss Stuart will call you to say this lesson, and you know nothing about it.

Laura. Well, Kitty, dear, never mind me! What does it signify? I am a dunce, you know; and you can't alter me. There's Madame calling again! you'll get in disgrace with her if you do not go directly; *that*, indeed, would be something to care about, and you at the top of the class! Here, take your French exercise, dear—go, go! I will learn my geography *so* well! Oh, do go, dear!—Chief cities on the Danube, Vienna, Buda, &c.

Kate would then snatch up her books, and go reluctantly to join her class ; but in such circumstances, it was a rare thing that she did not, *chemin faisant*, pounce upon some friend who did not seem particularly occupied, and entreat her "to help that poor Laura with her geography."

To see Laura preparing for a walk was highly amusing. It was the custom for us all to put on our bonnets and pelisses in the same apartment, one called the *dressing-room*, so that there was generally no little bustle among us. In vain Kate would collect the various articles necessary for Laura's toilet, and give them into her hands with a stimulating ——

"Now, Laura ! do be quick,—there's a dear girl ! Let us be the very first in the Hall to-day."

It was in vain. Laura would either drop each thing, and not know that she had dropped it ; or she would put it down and forget where she had laid it ; and the dressing-room would resound with her voice,—now hurried, now plaintive : "Oh ! have you seen my cap ?—There, now ! my collar has gone !—I had it this moment.—Now,

who *has* taken my collar?—Oh, I see it!—Here, Grace! little Grace Wilson! just crawl under the table, and pick up my bonnet, there's a dear little thing! Thank you, darling! Oh, how it is bent! What will Kate say? I wonder how it got under the table! It never will come straight. Grace, dearest, just run and tell Kate to come to me, or I shall never be ready. Oh! There now! There goes that horrid bell! I never *shall* be ready, and now my gloves are gone! How provoking! What an unfortunate girl I am!—Somebody always takes my gloves! I am sure it is done on purpose!"

By this time Laura's voice had generally assumed the tone of entire desolation. At this critical moment Kate would arrive, fully equipped, and with a few rapid motions and judicious twistings-about of Laura's person, would contrive to get it arrayed, not without a considerable amount of running to and fro, on the part of Grace Wilson, who was a great pet of the two friends, and was very proud to render either of them a service.

To me there was always something interesting about the friendship of these two girls. Kate's devotion to Laura was like that of a mother to a child ;—nothing could alter it. In vain the other girls ridiculed her ; remonstrated with her ; said Laura was idle, stupid, and good for nothing ; and wondered what Kate could see in her to love. Kate still loved Laura through evil and good report. Laura, on her side, loved and honoured Kate—she felt her superiority, acknowledged it, and was proud of it. As to Kate's acquirements, she believed them to be very extensive ;—certainly, second to none but those of Miss Stuart and Mrs. Anderson. With what firm incredulity she would listen to any one who should say that Kate Murray was *not* the most clever girl in the school,—that Mary Bell knew a great deal more about music ; Margaret Granby (that was myself) knew much more about drawing ; and Ellen Warwick knew more about everything else that was taught at school ! Laura was immoveable in her belief, and persisted in it—to the frequent annoyance of Kate, who would

get quite angry in her endeavours to persuade Laura that she was not very learned and accomplished.

Now they have long left school. One lives in Jamaica, the other in Edinburgh—both are married. Time and circumstances have doubtless changed their views, opinions, and feelings; yet I am persuaded that they now remember with unmixed pleasure the days they spent together at Mrs. Anderson's school.

CHAPTER III.

ELLEN WARWICK.

IN that little world there was the same variety I have since found in this great one. We had among us the strong and the weak—the poor and the rich—the overbearing and the sycophantic—the noble-minded and the mean—the naturally refined and the naturally coarse-hearted. Among us, also, there were “strange fellows” of Nature’s framing—we had our dullards and laughing-stocks—our buffoons and oddities—our wits and higher intelligences. One, indeed, we had with a spark of the sacred fire of genius; and she created a greater sensation and caused more discussion than any six of the other girls. Ellen Warwick had the portion of genius, even at school. She was wondered at, and laughed at, misunder-

stood and suspected, admired and depreciated, loved and hated, with more intensity than any of us. I am proud to say that she was one of my *two* friends, and in spite of the *tracasserie* of a school and the trials of after-life, we have always loved each other.

How shall I describe her? Her person and manners, like every thing belonging to Ellen, were subjects of dispute among us. "Ellen Warwick pretty!" some one would exclaim: "How very absurd! Why, all her features are ugly!"

Then there would be an outcry of—"Oh! oh! how can you say so? Look at her eyes!"

"Well, even *they* are not a good colour; they are quite grey, they are not blue,—and how low her forehead is!"

"Yes; but it is very broad, and *so* white."

"Her mouth is as broad as her forehead."

"It is not a silly, insignificant, little mouth, certainly; but she has beautiful teeth, and such a smile! And, then, what a quantity of beautiful hair!"

"Well, I think her quite plain!"

"That's because you do not like her, I know many persons who think her more than beautiful."

"Of course that must be because they are so fond of her that they are blind to her defects. For my part, I cannot see what there is in Ellen Warwick to make such a fuss about. I think she is very conceited and very proud; because people think her so very clever."

"She *is* very clever; but I am sure she is not half so conceited as some people I could name."

"I do not know *who* you mean; but I think Ellen Warwick is a disagreeable girl, and a plain girl; and I do not like her at all. It is quite ridiculous to hear so much said about her;—one would think she was a duke's daughter,—she is made of so much importance."

"And if she were a duke's daughter she would not be more really important, in my opinion, than she is now."

And thus the question could never be settled.

As I said before, Ellen Warwick was the

genius of our school. She wrote poetry, which we thought very beautiful, and which certainly was far superior to the verses of other young ladies of fifteen. She drew caricatures (without a grain of ill-nature in them) which threw us into convulsions of laughter; they were so droll and so like the originals. She found out the meaning of every inexplicable passage in our lessons; she was always applied to to solve a difficulty, or to invent a means to an end. She was unrivalled in fictitious narratives; she would often entertain Mary Bell and myself (who occupied the little white room with her) by telling such wonderful stories of her own invention that we listened half the night, and occasionally until the dawn of the next day. As regards her school progress, she was too irregular to keep the first place among us,—she had alternate moods of activity and languor, very provoking to her instructors; she got more scoldings and lectures than any of us. Her carelessness became a proverb,—she always forgot to put things in their right places, and her dress, without being

slovenly, was never distinguished by extraordinary precision and neatness. She sometimes stepped unconsciously beyond the limits of the school customs and rules, which, to others, were, as the laws of nature, unquestioned and inevitable. For instance,—one day during the drawing-lesson (at which a strict silence was always preserved) the drawing-master happened to take from his pocket a small volume, which he placed on the table near Ellen's drawing. While waiting for some paint to dry, she took up this book: it was a volume of Shakspeare, containing her favourite play, "As you like it." To the astonishment of her companions she made some observations to Mr. Bernard on the comparative beauties of Rosalind and Celia. Mr. Bernard was struck with her remark, and replied with animation. I believe they conversed for nearly ten minutes. Her companions, who for the most part understood nothing of what was said, "did in gaping wonderment abound," and looked anxiously at Mrs. Anderson to see what she thought of so unprecedented an event. That lady was at first

dumb with astonishment, but she, at length, recovered, and, with a good-natured smile, told Mr. Bernard that "if he allowed Miss Warwick to talk about poetry she would do no more painting that morning." Ellen, re-called to a sense of her infringement of school proprieties, became painfully embarrassed, and never raised her eyes from her drawing again until the lesson was finished. This little circumstance was long remembered against Ellen by those among us who disliked her; she was accused of vanity and conceit, and of a wish to attract Mr. Bernard's admiration,—which accusations she cast back with scorn and anger, or with silent contempt. Poor Ellen! Yes, she was then somewhat proud; but how gentle! how affectionate! how full of sensibility and the truest generosity! I shall have more to say of Ellen in another place. I will only add now that she was a year younger than I, and did not come to Mrs. Anderson's school until I had been there three years.

CHAPTER IV.



MARY BELL AND OTHERS.

I WILL now say something about a few more of the girls who occur to my mind as the most remarkable. I shall pass over in silence many who came and went during the first three years of my stay, and shall mention those who were my schoolfellows when I was in my sixteenth year. The teachers I reserve for a later part of my little book. To begin with my other friend, Mary Bell. Mary Bell was not pretty; Mary Bell was decidedly plain. She was not clever,—indeed she was the reverse of clever; but she had a power of steady perseverance that I have seldom seen equalled; and one bright gift she had, which all the world has since admired. Even you yourself, dear reader, whether school-

girl or not, must have heard of her vocal power, even if you have never heard her sing in concert or oratorio ; for the unassuming, insignificant Mary Bell is now acknowledged to have one of the finest voices ever produced in this anti-vocal-excellence climate. Mary was the eldest of a large family. Her mother was the widow of a professional man who died young, leaving a delicate and somewhat weak-minded wife to bring up seven children on a very small income.

Poor Mrs. Bell ! I am sure in her case, the back seemed very ill-suited to the burden ! yet she soon received powerful aid, and from the last quarter to which she would have looked for it. Her daughter Mary was now fourteen. Up to this time she had been remarked for nothing but strong physical health—a love of singing, an abhorrence of all books, and a seeming inability to comprehend anything but the most obvious appeals to the senses. She was a girl whom everybody called “*good-natured*” out of charity, because no one could call her graceful or pretty, not even her father,—and fathers do make the

wildest misjudgments concerning their daughters' looks. They seem to me far more blind in that respect, than mothers,—than lovers. As to calling her sensible or clever, it was out of the question. She was what her own family mildly termed "*rather dull*," and what other unprejudiced people emphatically pronounced "*stupid*." Her younger brothers and sisters cheated her in play, imposed on her, and laughed at her.

As I said before, Mary was about fourteen when her father died. His death operated on her in a wonderful manner,—as the magic kiss of Riquet changed the nature of the princess in the fairy tale. She sprung at once into a careful thoughtful girl. Her mother could scarcely believe it possible that it was *her* Mary, who would sit for hours by her bed-side to soothe her grief,—who quieted the little ones,—who delivered messages, to and from gentlemen on business, clearly and distinctly,—and who understood so well what was said to her. In a few months Mary spoke of plans for the future,—the silly thoughtless Mary no more.

Among Mrs. Bell's friends was a musical composer of eminence. He had once said that Mary's voice would be worth a fortune to a public singer. Mary, who never used to remember anything, remembered this now. She prevailed on her mother to write to this gentleman, inquiring the best course she could pursue in order to cultivate her voice properly as a professional singer. "For," said Mary, "I can never gain my own living in any other way, I am sure. I am a great deal too stupid to learn enough to be a governess; besides I could earn much more money as a singer, they tell me: don't you remember, mamma, Mr. B. said I might make a fortune by my voice—only think, mamma! if I were able to gain money enough to help you and the children!" Mrs. Bell behaved at first like a very weak-minded woman, as she was. "No daughter of hers should ever be a public singer; she would rather see her starve first," &c. However, a little more reflection, and a more pressing feeling of pecuniary deficiency, made her alter her opinion; and she wrote to Mr. B., as Mary had requested. He

was a kind-hearted man, and had himself struggled hard with poverty in early life; he now offered to superintend Mary's musical education gratis. At his suggestion Mary was placed at Mrs. Anderson's school, where she gave what assistance she could give, in consideration of the smallness of the sum her mother paid for her. In honour to Mrs. Anderson be it said, no one in the house could have supposed that Mary Bell was not received into it on precisely the same terms as any other young lady; indeed it was a general notion in the school that Miss Bell was Mrs. Anderson's favourite. Mr. B., who resided near Avenue House, never neglected his self-imposed task; he came regularly twice a week, to give lessons in music and singing to Mary, who was his only pupil; he taught for love, but he would not teach for money. Mrs. Anderson allowed Mary to practise four hours a day at first, and afterwards six. This was a great rock of offence to the music teacher, who was no great friend to musical genius in another, probably because she was utterly without it herself. But

if she had had it, could she have been a musical teacher in a *school*? As a reward to Mary for her intense application to the *science* of music, Mrs. Anderson allowed her to take drawing lessons, because she had evinced no trifling taste in that art; besides which she took lessons from Signor Contaro, the Italian master, because a correct pronounciation of Italian is indispensable to a public singer. Gentle, hard-working Mary! You seemed too oppressed with a feeling of gratitude. We none of us understood your devoted love of Mrs. Anderson! How eager you were to save her trouble—to prevent her knowing little school matters that would give her pain! How affectionate, how respectful, you were to all your teachers! As Madame d’Almette used to say, “C’est un vrai plaisir que de lui apprendre quelque chose!” It is true, Mary was still a dunce in all but music and drawing; the easiest school lessons were Herculean labours to her, poor girl! And thorough bass was a sad wearying to her spirit; but she went on, on, on—plodding, plodding, until she attained an emi-

nence few have attained. But what made me love her so, was her sweet moral nature. She was not envious, or jealous, or resentful; she loved those who were distinguished by personal and mental endowments which she so much wanted. She coveted no one's beauty, though she was the plainest girl in the school; although, in after years, I have heard her say it would have made her path to fame much smoother had she only possessed a pretty face. To Ellen Warwick and to me her attachment was most disinterested, most generous; for, at that time, we never loved her as she deserved to be loved; we were occupied with each other, and often forgot Mary: but Mary never forgot us; and, I verily believe, was never jealous. Ellen, indeed, often told me there was much more in Mary than any of us thought. One day Ellen said, "She will turn out great in something, I am sure!" I answered lightly, "*Great*—in what? In grammar, perhaps, when she can tell the difference between a nominative and an accusative." "No, not in grammar," answered Ellen, "but in singing and in self-

sacrifice ! ” Ellen’s words were prophetic. Mary has since become great in singing, as you, courteous reader, are aware ; and great in self-sacrifice, as her mother and all her family can testify. But even now I do not think that Mary is appreciated ; her manners are not graceful or pleasing ; she is silent and backward, and she is often thought sullen when she is only thinking. She is one of those persons who, because they do not do themselves justice, do not get justice from other people. Yet Mary Bell must be happy if any one on earth is happy—she has accomplished her desire ; she now supports her mother, and all those of her family who cannot yet support themselves. She is an illustration of that scripture which says, “ The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.”

Susanna Jones was a pretty, but silly looking girl of sixteen. She was remarkable for never knowing her lessons, and for being amazingly ignorant on all subjects except personal appearance, dress, and what she was pleased to call *love*. Susanna was not ill-natured, and the only one

in the school whom she disliked was myself. We were the two (so-called) *beauties* of the school. Then there was Susanna's younger sister, Sarah : she was about eleven or twelve, quick-witted, lively, very pert, and very plain. These two sisters could never agree, and at their parents' request they were separated as much as possible.

I must not omit Grace Wilson's friend, Maria Chester, who, though two years younger than Ellen Warwick, was generally next to her in all our classes. She had great natural ability, and was what was called an *odd* girl, never doing things as other people do them. She was passionate, impetuous, romping, but had a heart full of affectionate sensibility ; she was candid, frank, generous, and alive to every noble, every tender feeling. She was always wishing she had been born a boy ; perhaps because, with her character, she never could be masculine. She was a bright-looking creature, although not really handsome then, as I hear she is now. She had a profusion of glossy deep *red-brown* hair,

a clear brilliant complexion, "like roses floating on milk," as a poet of the Elizabethan age might have said, and large blue eyes, "like violets bathed in dew," as many of us said who were not poets at all. Maria was occasionally quite beautiful, like a Hebe or Euphrosyne; at other times she was positively plain. It just depended upon the mood she chanced to be in, for she was very variable. She was subject to fits of jealousy, fits of despondency, fits of moodiness, fits of poetic inspiration, fits of melancholy, fits of laughter, fits of tears, fits of self-reproach, fits of idleness, and fits of energetic industry. She was very clever, and knew much for her age, which, at the time I speak of, was about thirteen. She was petulant and rude in manner very often. She was ready at repartee, and flippancy made her unamiable, as it does everybody. She could not bridle her tongue, and she suffered bitterly for that fault. She said too many cutting things to the girls when they provoked her, to be generally liked, and she was too saucy to the teachers to be a favourite with any of them, except,

indeed, with Miss Stuart. Still Maria Chester was esteemed for her cleverness, her generosity, and her strength of attachment, and I am happy to say, that as she grew older she became more amiable. She is now a remarkably handsome woman, and a great wit. I heard the other day that she is about to be married to an M.P., after having refused a few dozen eligible young men of her native county. Whether their offers are attributable to Maria's beauty, talents, and amiability, or to her father's large fortune and open-housekeeping, is not easy to determine; she herself decided that the latter was the attraction in all cases, except in that of the M.P. in question. But as he is a handsome young man of great ability, and some fame as a *littérateur*, it is not unlikely that Maria's judgment may have been influenced by her heart. But,—to return to our school days,—Maria Chester and Grace Wilson were sworn friends (after Grace's eldest sister, Rose, had left school); they quarrelled very often; and then numerous little three-cornered notes passed between them before they were

reconciled. Maria was always a favourite with me, and I liked her more for what she promised to become than for what she was.

Then there was Caroline Webster, the most awkward girl in the school, and there was Jane Worthington, the most stupid girl in the school, besides Inez Oliveira, the Portuguese. The nature and habits of these young ladies will fill a chapter, and as this is already long enough, they shall have one to themselves.

CHAPTER V.

THE AWKWARD GIRL, THE STUPID GIRL, AND THE PORTUGUESE.

DEAR READER, recall to mind all the awkward people you ever knew, and put all their awkwardness together, and you will not then realise the amount of Caroline Webster's awkwardness. It was incredible. It was not in the power of language to exaggerate it: there I am quite safe; I need not fear, in anything I may say on the subject, to overstep the truth. Fancy a large, tall, bony girl of sixteen, not absolutely ill-made—that is to say, she had the usual number of arms and legs, and they were of the ordinary length and shape, but were so attached to her body as to give one an apprehension that they would drop off every moment. She had a large

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- head, adorned with the stiffest and coarsest black hair ; a broad, unmeaning face ; two large, dreamy, black eyes ; she had no neck, or one so short as to be imperceptible, a hand as broad as a shoulder of mutton, and a back about as extensive as Salisbury Plain. Her frock was always in disarray, never securely fastened, but always looked as if it would slip from her person with the next motion. She had a slouching gait, gestures all angles ; add to this, an inability to move without throwing something down, and you will have some faint idea of Caroline. To have anything like an accurate conception of her, you must have seen her as she was then. Time, the alleviator of all ills, may have done something for Caroline Webster's awkwardness : at the time of which I am speaking, every action was the sublime of *gaucherie*. It was not the pretty little *gaucherie* of bashfulness. Oh no ! there was nothing of *that* in it ; it was a broad, uncompromised uncouthness which no dancing-master, no dumbbells, no gymnastic exercises could mitigate. Perhaps her awkwardness was never so exag-

gerated in its display as during a dancing lesson. You should have seen her perform a *chassé*. She looked like an obstinate elephant, urged forward in a succession of heavy bounds; a *balancé* was a serious butting at her partner, in which the unfortunate partner was sure to suffer one or two bumps or pushes. In *l'été* she used to advance with a *pas de charge* which generally precipitated her into the arms of her *vis-à-vis*, and she retreated in such a manner as to jump heavily on her partner's toes. Poor M. Pirouette, the dancing-master, was not the most patient of men, and Caroline tried him to the utmost, although she was neither inattentive nor lazy. She would take a whole month to learn a single step or figure, and at the end of that time she would perform it so as to throw him into despair. It added not a little to the drollery of the effect, that she expended considerable energy on the matter. It was so evident, that all the powers of her mind were brought to bear on the important movement. How she laboured to put her arms in an easy position! In her anxiety to spring

lightly, as desired, she frequently lost her equilibrium, and came to the ground in a very precarious attitude. She would point her toe to such a degree, that she tottered with the effort. In vain M. Pirouette would exclaim—

“ Mon Dieu, Mademoiselle Vebestère, ayez un peu plus de grace. Do not look to your feet, Mees. Levez la tête ! Mais !—mademoiselle, qu’est ce que c’est que cela ? A-t-on jamais vu balancer de la sorte ? Prenez garde ! Mon Dieu, mademoiselle, prenez garde de tomber ! Doucement—vat you call gentlie. C’est bizarre, cela ! Encore une fois. Enfin, c’est vrai, mademoiselle,—you have not de genie for the dance.”

In the daily business of the school-room it was impossible to watch Caroline without laughing. If she attempted to move an inkstand, she was sure to overturn it. She would let things fall from her hands in the most helpless style. In walking across the room, she would make straight for the point of destination without any regard to intervening objects ; she would clamber in the most uncouth fashion upon all the forms in her

way ; she would bounce against all the people, big and little, teachers and pupils. Her awkwardness was like the British law, no respecter of persons. It was a common thing for one girl to say to another, " Get out of the way ; here comes Caroline Webster."

With all this, Caroline Webster was the most good-natured girl living. She would do anything for anybody. The quantity of mischief she achieved by way of rendering service to others was incalculable. Good, blundering, headlong Caroline ! If she volunteered to fasten a string or button, she would invariably break it off,—if to fasten up your hair, she would surely break your comb,—if to put away your work-box, she would seize it violently, and away would go all the contents rolling over the floor,—then loudly would she exclaim against herself, and be so very sorry, that you could not have the heart to scold her, especially when you saw, that in her eagerness to collect all the scattered articles she would run a quantity of pins and needles into her hands.

If Mrs. Anderson or one of the teachers inquired "What was that noise?" the answer was generally, "Only Caroline Webster falling down."

Once, I remember, Caroline had rashly mounted on a chair, and was looking out of the upper, unpainted panes of the Grey Room window. Several girls had warned her. "You will break the window, Caroline." "You will certainly fall." "How absurd for *you* to get on a chair!" "Some people should learn to stand before they begin to climb." "Good bye, Caroline; you'll be out through the window presently." Caroline grew indignant. "Why should *she* fall, indeed? Why should *she* break a window rather than any one else?" (Cries of "Oh! oh! Caroline!" and laughter.) She "sometimes met with an accident, it is true, but so did everybody; and as to breaking a window, it was quite absurd!" She had no sooner said the words, than, giving her head an awkward toss, she ran it right through a pane. She lost her balance and fell forward: fortunately her chin rested on the

frame of the pane. She would have been precipitated into the garden, some twenty feet below, if her knees had not lodged on a narrow ledge inside the window, while her chin remained propped above. She screamed ; the girls rushed to her rescue, dragged her from her perilous position, and, with a rueful look, she fell clumsily to the ground in the midst of their irrepressible laughter, which was only interrupted by her angry exclamations, that they were very unfeeling to laugh when she had hurt herself so much. This was very true ; but it is a fault in schools, as in other communities, to laugh when cause for laughter is seen, without much regard to the feelings of others.

Poor Caroline Webster felt this truth acutely. She tried to hide her sensitiveness ; and succeeded so well, that it was a common saying in the school, "Oh, you may laugh at Caroline just as much before her face as you would behind her back. She does not mind it."

But Caroline did mind it, as a painful blush and increased awkwardness often showed. Per-

haps few persons are so sensitive to ridicule as the awkward. I think we should all keep a strict check over our inclination to laugh at those who are so unfortunate as to be distinguished by any remarkable deficiency of personal grace. It is matter of regret to me now that I so thoughtlessly used poor Caroline "for my mirth," while she, perhaps, writhed under a sense of inferiority.

As Caroline Webster was awkward in all things, so was Jane Worthington stupid in all things. In her case, appearances were not deceitful. She looked very stupid, and nobody could say she was not as stupid as she looked. She was fourteen or fifteen years of age,—short, stout, broad, and heavy, for her age. She had been at school five years, and had been taught at home before that; but she could not read. She made a sad jumble of words,—mis-pronouncing, mis-spelling, utterly mistaking them. I wonder whether she can read now! Then, as to writing! She could make letters well enough (many stupid persons write a good hand), but that was of little use; for how

could she write when she could not even spell the easiest words? and if she could have spelt them, she had no ideas to express by them. What she thought? What she knew? She could not *think*, though, like many dunces, she *thought* that she did think. She really knew nothing, though she fancied that she knew a good deal. Hers was the densest mind I ever came in contact with—"not pierceable by power of any" idea. She was, I believe, the nearest approach to idiocy that it is possible for a sane being to make. In proportion to her dullness was the trouble taken with her by Mrs. Anderson:—and at fifteen all who endeavoured to teach her gave up the task as hopeless,—all except Miss Allan, the *under-teacher*, who still persevered. That lady had, as she thought, succeeded in giving her some notion of the rudiments of geography, grammar, and history. One day she asked her, with the anticipation of a correct answer, "Into how many parts or quarters is the world divided?" Jane, after considering a few moments, replied, "Four." "Very right, my dear," said Miss

Allan ; "now tell me their names." "Orthography, Etymology, Syntax, and Prosody," quoth the sapient Jane. Another time, Miss Allan asked, "What Roman General first invaded Britain?" and Jane informed her that it was Edward the Black Prince. Meeting in her reading the term "debt of nature," she was asked if she knew what it meant. She replied, with great self-sufficiency, "Oh, yes ; she knew very well what it meant." "Well, what did it mean?" "Why, the National Debt, to be sure ; any one knew that !" She was once sent to find out on a map all the places of which she had been reading. After looking for a very long time, she came to Miss Allan and said, "I have found out all the places but Caractacus, ma'am. I do not think *that* is marked." One Sunday, after a sermon about the destruction of Babylon, she asked Miss Stuart, "Who was Babylon?"

Madame D'Almette was quite sure she would never learn French. Her errors in that language were most absurd. The most ingenious, I remember, was translating *les Pays Bas* "the

stocking countries," and "an eye-glass " *une cuisinière* (quizzingniere). Jane was very silent, and very fond of plum-cake. If provoked, she became dogged, perverse, and vindictive. Vain were all persuasions. "Now *do*, dear Jane."—"No, I won't." "Why will you not?"—"Because I won't." There was one happy epoch to which she always looked forward—the time when she should be sixteen; for then her "education would be finished, and she should never open a book any more." Oh! Jane was a glorious dunce!

Inez Oliveira was the daughter of a Portuguese merchant, who had spent part of his youth in England, where he had acquired a few opinions concerning female education, which remained with him in after-life. One of these opinions was, that a woman is more likely to be amiable and virtuous if she can read, write, understand, and reflect, than if she cannot. He was aware that he exposed himself to the ill-natured animadversions of most of his friends, when he brought his daughter to England to be educated after a

fashion differing in most respects from that in which Portuguese ladies are generally educated. But Senor Juan Alfonso Oliveira was not a person to do as others do, merely because others expected him to do so. His wife was dead; his two sons, Juan and Roderigo, were intelligent, well-educated youths of nineteen and twenty; his daughter Inez was about twelve years of age, as yet utterly uncultivated; but as he wished her to become a companion and friend to her brothers, he came to England with his children, travelled in this country for a year, with them, and at the end of that period, being obliged to return to his affairs, he placed Inez at Mrs. Anderson's school, and returned to Portugal with his second son, leaving Juan, the eldest, in the house of his London correspondent, to become a regular English man of business. Thus, the young Inez was not quite alone in a strange land. Her brother came to see her frequently. Inez had been two years at school when I first saw her, so that she was then about fifteen years old. She was not in the school-room when I was introduced there; and

some hours after that event I was wandering about the house alone (as Rose Wilson had been called to some lesson), when I came before the door of the Grey Room (an apartment which shall be described presently). It was half-open; I heard a sound of music from within, and peeped into the room. Inez Oliveira was there alone; she was seated on a low stool, playing on her guitar and singing a Portuguese song, which she seemed trying to remember. At that time I had never seen a foreigner; that is, a foreign young lady. Her beauty was new to me, and therefore its effect was the stronger. She seemed to me what all "ladies from a far countrie" are, in the opinion of a certain class of English people,—“beautiful exceedingly.” Her small, slender, exquisitely proportioned figure was attired in a plain black silk frock. From one side of her waist hung a rosary of lapis lazuli and gold. Her pretty little hands moved lightly over the strings, and her sweet face was now bent over the instrument, and partially hidden by the long black curls which *really* swept over it, and now raised towards the ceiling, as she

tried to recall a word or a note of the half-forgotten song. For a moment the dark, pencilled brows would be contracted with vexation as she struck a wrong chord; again, they would become smooth, and a smile would overspread her face as she struck a right one. Again and again she tried the air, until all seemed to be right, and then she settled herself once more, and sang the song through, in a clear, distinct, and very melodious little voice. As soon as it was ended, she jumped up, threw down the guitar, and began to dance about the room for very joy. At last she ran to the door breathless with excitement, and for the first time perceived me, whom (in the twilight) she mistook for one of the other girls, and exclaimed "Hi! hi! hi! I have sing it all—all—all! I shall not forget no more! It is so pretty, so pretty! Hi! hi! hi! My dear Juan shall be so please!" Then perceiving that I was the new girl, she stopped short, her long eyelashes fell—they literally shaded her cheek—her clear olive skin became suffused with crimson, and she said, "I bege your pardōne." I was

even more embarrassed than she, for I was younger, and I had been caught in the act of listening.

I am sorry to say that Inez was not as amiable as she was pretty ; her face had a certain uncultivated, semi-barbarous look when at rest, that was very characteristic ; at times, too, when she was angry, the expression of her countenance became dark and almost deadly in its fierceness ; and she was so revengeful that few of the girls cared to offend her. She liked and disliked with vehemence ; she was not deficient in intellectual power, but she was too indolent and impatient to exercise it systematically. To her teachers she was always respectful, except indeed to Miss Crawford, whom she hated and generally designated as "that silly old thing." She called everything that she disliked *old*. She was sometimes languid and moody, at other times frolicsome and full of the most mischievous tricks. In her bed-room she played strange pranks. When the fit seized her, she would suddenly spring out of her own bed and on to another, where she would

perform a rapid little dance on the body of the half-sleeping occupant, who would in vain call for mercy ; and before it was possible for her to rise in self-defence, Inez would be off, on to the next bed, and would there repeat her dance on some other unfortunate girl ; whenever she elicited a cry louder than ordinary, she would manifest great delight, making her usual wild chuckle of pleasure, and exclaiming, " Never mind ! never mind !—be still, good old thing ! such fun—oh ! such fun ! I shall be finish by-and-by." She was rather vain of her face, and objected to washing it often, on the plea that it would wear out her eye-lashes and eye-brows, which were very beautiful ; but, to make amends for her own imperfect ablutions, she would wash with her own sponge and towel the busts of Shakspeare and Milton, which stood on the mantel-piece in her bed-room—this she did every morning. Her affection for her family was unbounded. No one ever had such a father as hers, no one could have such brothers. How proud she was of Juan ! There was always a considerable eagerness among

the girls to get a sight of *Don Juan*, as he was called. Juan himself, like most young men engaged in commerce, was not over anxious to face a dozen girls, unsupported by any of his own sex. Juan was a good-looking young man enough ; he looked just like what he was, a gentlemanly young merchant of the nineteenth century. But to the imaginations of my school-fellows, *Don Juan Carlos Oliveira* was a Hero—a Paladin—a Cid, with all the beauties of Adonis, and all the court breeding of Lord Chesterfield. But, then, was not his name Juan Carlos ? Did he not wear a moustache ? Was he not tall and slender ? Did he not speak English with a most bewitching accent ? As we had very seldom seen him, it was no wonder we believed everything Inez said of him. I am sure it never occurred to any of us that Juan Oliveira did anything but compose songs, and sing them to his guitar, or walk in groves "by moonlight alone"—wrapped in a cloak of genuine bandit or hidalgo dimensions, with plenty of fur round the collar, and a sharp stiletto hidden in the folds. We never pictured to our-

selves anything like the reality. How could we imagine such a person seated on a high stool in a dingy counting-house, with a huge ledger before him, and a pen behind his ear, or, in hours of refined relaxation, lounging on a bench with a cigar in his mouth and a glass of porter beside him? Then, what tales Inez told us of her country! How beautiful it was! Such skies! such water! such flowers! such trees! Lisbon was, of course, a much larger and finer city than London. If any one doubted the fact, how indignant, how furious she became! "Yes, yes, I tell you, Lisbon is two times more big as your dirty old London. Oh! if you shall see Lisbon, you shall never like to live in your London no more. You shall be quite ashamed;—Ah! ah! My country is not such a stupid little old place as your England!" "Oh! but, Inez, you used to say you saw some very pretty places in England?" "Yes, vare pretty for England, but not so good as the ugly places in my country. I tell you," (she was fond of comparisons,) "I tell you, your country is like that candle; it is better

as nothing ! but my country, Portugal, it is like the sun, better as everything in the world ! ”

No one attempted to argue seriously with Inez about the merits of the two countries, but we often joked her about her incomparable native land.

CHAPTER VI.

MORE OF ELLEN WARWICK.

ELLEN's father was a wealthy brewer in Northumberland, who had married the daughter of a literary man of some reputation. Mrs. Warwick had an only sister, whose marriage had been less fortunate, in a pecuniary sense, than her own. To this sister she was fondly attached, and after the death of their father Mrs. Warwick's only anxiety was about her sister, Mrs. Vaughan; for Mr. Warwick was an attentive husband, and their only child, Ellen, was all that a mother's heart could desire. Her education had been conducted with great success at home, until she was nearly fourteen, when she was sent to Mrs. Anderson's school for three years, that she might have the benefit of London masters. As Mrs. Anderson

was an old and tried friend of Mrs. Warwick, the latter had no troubles about Ellen, except the constant yearning of a mother to see her child ; she had, therefore, leisure and sympathy to give to her sister, in all her trials. Dr. Vaughan was a younger son of a good family, and had followed no profession but that of a *gentleman*, until the period of his marriage, when he became industrious,—entered the medical profession,—established himself as a physician in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and worked hard to support his rising family. At first, matters went on very well ; but at the end of seven years they had four children, and found it difficult to keep up appearances. Year after year their expenses increased, and year after year Dr. Vaughan's practice fell off ; he wrote clever articles for Reviews, but that did not bring enough money ; and, in a fit of disgust, he determined to quit Newcastle for ever, and try his fortune elsewhere ; for which purpose he converted all his effects into money. Mrs. Vaughan and their children remained with Mrs. Warwick while this business was in progress, and when it

was terminated, Dr. Vaughan joined them, and communicated to his wife his intention of going to London. To this she made no objection, for she loved and honoured him too much to have any will but his; and, in three days after Dr. Vaughan's arrival, his family departed with him from Mr. Warwick's house, much to that gentleman's satisfaction, for he was a wealthy man, and had a natural antipathy to poor relations.

A short time after these events happened in Northumberland, our whole school was to go out for a long anticipated ramble in Bushy Park. Ellen Warwick and I were both rather indisposed, and, as Mrs. Anderson decided, unfit for the fatiguing pleasure in prospect. We were ordered to remain at home. This was a sad disappointment to Ellen, who hoped that when we were at Bushy, Mrs. Anderson would take us to Hampton Court, as she longed greatly to see the pictures there. However we soon ceased regretting what could not be altered, and after they were all gone we enjoyed the unusual quiet of

the house, and found much pleasure in wandering from room to room, without any particular design. We at length established ourselves in the drawing-room, with needle-work and books. Ellen had no gift for needle-work, but she read aloud with peculiar grace; we were in the middle of "Coleridge's Ancient Mariner," which Miss Stuart had lent us to read, when a servant entered the room, and announced—"A lady and gentleman to see Miss Warwick."

Ellen's first thought was of her parents, and she sprang forward to embrace them; but, as the visitors advanced, she saw her error, and was so moved at the disappointment that she looked at the lady for some moments, without recognising her, until she said—

"What! Ellen! Have you quite forgotten your aunt?"

"Oh my Aunt Vaughan! My dear, dear aunt! How glad I am to see you! But what is the matter? Are papa and mamma well?"

"Yes, my love, quite well. All is well in your home. We have only come to see you."

At this "*we*" Ellen looked at the lady's companion. He was a tall, manly-looking boy of about Ellen's age (*i. e.*, sixteen); he had a dark complexion, and a serious expression of countenance. His eyes had been fixed on Ellen from the moment he entered the room; now they were turned away; while she looked at him with the timid embarrassment of a young girl who is expected to say something to a person whom she does not know. Her aunt relieved her by laughingly exclaiming,

"Why, Ellen! you must have lost your memory! Don't you recollect who this is?"

Ellen looked again; and this time the youth looked at her, and smiled.

"Is it possible? Can this be Lewis? Oh yes, I see it is," cried she, eagerly taking his hand. "Dear Lewis! how you are altered! But it is four years since you went to Germany, and you are quite a man now!"

"You have altered, too; but I should have known you any where, Ellen," said her cousin.

After a little while Ellen presented me to them as her *dearest* friend. Mrs. Vaughan took my

hand and looked kindly at me, and her son scrutinised me attentively. They all went to take a turn in the garden, but they would not go without me. Mrs. Vaughan walked first with Ellen, to converse on family matters, and Lewis Vaughan and I were left together—a most uncomfortable position for both parties, let me tell you, good reader. I cannot say that my girlish vanity was gratified by any attention from Master Lewis. His grave face seemed full of thought as he watched each motion of Ellen, or his mother, I could not tell which. To be sure he *did* talk to me; he talked of how many miles it was to London, and how many miles to Newcastle; how he admired Avenue House and the garden; how he thought my Fani very pretty. He asked me what I thought of Mrs. Anderson; spoke of oaks and elms, and the great bell, and the peacocks, with other absorbingly interesting topics; but he never spoke of Ellen. I did not know then how instinctively a very young pure love seeks to hide itself; and I did not know then that Lewis Vaughan's nature was precisely that which could

sanctify itself by a dreamy poetical attachment to such a girl as Ellen. Lewis was at heart a poet, therefore it was not necessary that the object of first fancy should be *beautiful* in the ordinary acceptation of the word. As I have said before, Ellen was not pretty; but Lewis remembered her high, generous disposition, and her childish sympathy with all his boyish tastes; and the unmistakeable soul which *now* spoke in her face, the sweet affection manifested towards himself, were sufficient to turn the half ideal fancy for his cousin which he had cherished at Bonn (for want of some real object to adore) into a genuine feeling—not a passion, perhaps, but something rarer and better.

Some of my readers may cry out at this, “What nonsense! A boy of sixteen! How unnatural!” Others will know better, and say, “Quite natural, for *such* a boy!” And they, perhaps, will agree with me that it is a great blessing to be able to love anything as Lewis Vaughan loved Ellen. Such love is more ennobling than the order of the Garter.

But of course I did not philosophise thus, at the time of which I speak, when seventeen years had not passed over my head.

I did not remain long in the garden, but retired to the house, leaving my friend alone with her relations. I recollect how melancholy I felt at the reflection that papa and mamma had not seen me for more than three years, and that even if I were dying they could not come to me. This thought was always forced on me when I saw any of my companions elated by a sight of "some one from home."

When the school returned, Mrs. Anderson spent an hour with Mrs. Vaughan; and after that, Ellen went away with her aunt and cousin for a visit of a few days.

That evening I could not learn my lessons for thinking of Lewis Vaughan and his earnest noble face. He was certainly like Ellen—yes, but there was a quiet strength in his face which seemed to demand my respect, and awaked my curiosity. Suddenly the idea of his probable love for Ellen came upon me like an inspiration; and then came

the question, "Will she love him?"—what was that to me? I ought not to think of love and lovers. I was too young—I ought to be occupied with my lessons. But, again, Ellen was *my friend*, and I ought to be interested in what concerned her; so there could be nothing wrong in ruminating on the probability of her loving Lewis Vaughan, and becoming his wife when they were old enough. However, I could come to no conclusion until Ellen's return.

All that week I was idle and low-spirited, and every one said, "How stupid and disagreeable Margaret Granby has been since Ellen went away!"—all but one, and that one was Mary Bell. She was more attentive and affectionate to me than ever, and wished that Ellen would return, with such sincerity, that it set me thinking whether I was as purely anxious for Ellen's happiness as Mary was for mine.



THE GREY-ROOM.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GREY ROOM AND ELLEN'S RETURN.

THERE was a certain grey room at Avenue House which was much liked by the girls. It was devoted to the practice of music and drawing. The walls were of wainscot, painted grey. It contained an old grand pianoforte, and a long table, with desks, for drawing; instead of school-room forms to sit on, there were cane-bottomed chairs. An individual of lively imagination might have been deluded into the idea that this apartment was a sort of parlour, had it not been for the uncarpeted floor. Comfortless as it always seemed to the girls when they arrived at school at the beginning of the half-year, fresh from the glowing luxury of home, in a few short weeks the grey room resumed its character of

superiority to the school room (called in school time, when we always spoke French), *la classe*.

The *habituées* of the grey room were those only who learnt music and drawing. They often retreated to it, under colour of the practice of those arts, for a lounge, or a snug half-hour's reading, or that dear delight of a school-girl, a good gossip. The music teacher, Miss Crawford, was the sovereign of this apartment. She gave her lessons on the above-named grand piano, whose tone need not be particularised to those who have heard school pianos, appropriated to the juvenile pupils; suffice it to say, it was like no other instrument under heaven. Mr. Bernard, the drawing master, gave his lessons here every Tuesday and Friday.

The grey room had two large windows looking into the avenue, and as these were the only windows accessible to the girls, from which persons coming to or going from the house could be seen, it is scarcely necessary to add, that no one ever came or went without being reconnoitred from the grey room window. To be sure, the

lower half of each window was covered by a thick coat of white paint, for the express purpose of restraining the wandering gaze; but curiosity, like love (if it be of the genuine sort), "will find out a way." The painted panes merely served the purpose of exciting a strong desire to look through them;—and *that* any person but a school-mistress would have known. Had the windows been transparent, it is probable that we might sometimes desire to turn from our duties and look through them; but as they were painted, we always desired to do so, and the thing became of importance because it was forbidden. It was vain for Miss Crawford to exclaim, "Come away from the windows, young ladies." There the young ladies were to be seen continually, perched upon chairs, peeping through the upper panes, which were guiltless of paint. It was rare, indeed, that a visitor escaped these vigilant spies. If no one else chanced to be on the lookout, little Grace Wilson, who was "*altre le più curiose curiosa*," never failed to catch a glimpse of the passing individual.

One day Miss Crawford's voice was heard, speaking in this style:—"One, two, three, four; one, two, three, four; one, two—wrong in the bass. Come down from the window, Grace. One, two—first finger on D sharp—three, four—do you hear me, Miss Grace? Come down."

"Yes, Ma'am, directly," cried Grace, still looking eagerly out into the avenue, and flattening her face against the window, in her anxiety.

"How many times am I to speak to you, Miss Grace?"

"Not once more, Ma'am," cried Grace, springing down, and taking her seat by my side at the drawing table. "Not once more, if I could help it, you cross old thing," she added, *sotto voce*.

"Hush, Grace," said I; "that is very rude. You know you ought not to have been at the window at all."

"Ha, ha!" retorted Grace in a knowing tone. "I know somebody who would like to have been at the window just now, for all its being against rule."

"Why, what did you see, then?"

"I thought Miss Granby was much too proper to be curious," retorted Grace; "she won't look out of the window herself upon any consideration. It's against rule; but she don't mind asking that naughty, tiresome, inquisitive Grace what she saw when she looked out."

I could not help smiling, but I replied with all the dignity of an elder girl to one of "the little ones,"—"Well, never mind. It was thoughtless in me. Go on with your drawing, now. If it be any one to see me, I shall know soon enough."

"Oh! it is not any one to see you. Do not think it is, or you will be disappointed. Come, if you will just shade this horrible old man's nose for me, I will tell you who I saw just now. Did you ever see such a mess as I have made of this head? Do just look at it, dear!—What fun!—How droll it looks!"

"Oh, Grace! How careless of you! You began it so nicely, too! Mr. Bernard praised you last time, and now what will he say? All

this was done by putting it away carelessly, or not putting it away at all. Here, give it to me, and let me see what I can do with it." And I took her drawing.

"Oh, you darling!" cried she, kissing me with school-girl vehemence. "I was in a monstrous fright about it. But if you only *look* at it, I know it will all come right directly. Here's the chalk, dear. Let me cut it. It will make your hands all black. And now let me tell you *who* I saw in the avenue."

I was stoical, and determined to set a fine example of curiosity controlled, and replied—"No; if it concerns me, I shall know in time. Look at me while I alter this."

"Yes, dear, I am looking very hard indeed. But—but—I must tell you who it was.—It was Ellen Warwick!"

"I guessed as much," said I, with assumed coolness. "Now, attend to this, Grace. You should hold your pencil loosely,—so; and make your strokes all lightly, and in this direction."

"Why," said Grace, heedless of my instruction,

and poking her pretty little face into mine,—“I thought that you and Miss Warwick were such *very* great friends!”

“And so we are.”

“Why, how coolly you take her coming back! I’m sure, if Maria Chester were to go away for a whole fortnight, I should jump up and dance for joy if any one told me she was come back; that is, if I had not cried myself to death while she was gone.”

Here Grace laughed aloud at the droll idea of crying herself to death, and stooping her head to smother her merriment, one of her curls was caught on the point of the crayon which I was using. Of course this only added to her mirth—she could laugh at nothing; and now she gave vent to a louder burst. Then Miss Crawford began,—

“My dear Miss Granby, I am quite surprised to see you encouraging that idle child in her silly chattering. Pray, leave off directly.”

At this, Mary Bell, who was drawing opposite to me, and had overheard part of what Grace

said, turned round to Miss Crawford, and said in a respectful tone:—"I think you do not know that Margaret is showing Grace how to do her drawing."

"That is no reason why she should let Grace make so much noise; and I do not see that you have anything to do with the matter, Miss Bell."

Poor Mary turned again to her drawing, while a slight colour overspread her face; but she soon looked up at me with a sweet affectionate smile, which I should have returned in kind, had not my attention been attracted at that precise moment by the opening of the door immediately behind Mary, and the entrance of Ellen Warwick. Down fell the crayon on Grace's luckless drawing, and we were in each other's arms. Oh the joy of that embrace! That strong young affection,—how pure it is! Let who will sneer at a school-girl's friendship, I believe there are few better or less selfish feelings. Mary Bell came in for her share of Ellen's greetings; and little Grace almost devoured her with kisses.

All this created some little disturbance in the

quiet Grey room. It roused Laura Harrington, who was at the piano, taking her lesson from Miss Crawford, and more than half asleep, as usual. She woke up a little, and letting both hands drop from the keys, smiled lazily at Ellen, and seemed disposed to rise and go to her. Miss Crawford, however, did not permit that,—“Sit still, Laura ; your lesson is not yet finished.”

Miss Crawford's voice recalled Ellen to a sense of school propriety, which required that her respects should be paid to a teacher, if one happened to be in the room, before paying any regard to the pupils. She therefore extricated herself from us, and advanced to the piano, saying, “How do you do, Ma'am ?”

“How do you do, Miss Warwick ?—Sit down, young ladies, and do not let me have so much noise. Play that again, Laura,—a little faster, —one, two, three, fo——” At that moment the first stroke of the bell was heard for us to dress for dinner.

“There goes that horrid bell again !” exclaimed

Laura. "If you please, Ma'am, may I go?—If you do not let me go, I shall not be ready for the second bell; and then Mrs. Anderson will be so angry! She said I was always to go the moment the bell rang."

"Yes, you may go," said Miss Crawford, who was anxious to arrange her own hair in the best style, as it was Mr. Bernard's day.

"Oh, thank you, Ma'am!" said Laura. "Now I may kiss you, Ellen. Why, they are all gone, I declare! And there's all that music left out! Well, I shan't put it away. Oh! ring away, you nasty, stupid, deafening, old thing!" And *exit* Laura, as slowly as possible.

CHAPTER VIII.

OUR BED-ROOM, AND A PRIVATE CONVERSATION.

"At last!" cried Ellen, as we entered our bedroom for the night on the evening of her return; "I began to think bed-time would never come. We have scarcely spoken to each other since I came back;—dear, dear Margaret!" And she kissed me with the greatest affection.

"I have been *so* occupied to-day," I replied. "You know Friday is always my busiest day;—I never felt so heartily tired of my lessons before. Poor Signor Contaro was quite angry with me for being so stupid. I wrote all sorts of nonsense in my exercise; and once, when he asked me what was the nominative to some verb, (fortunately it was *amare*,) I answered 'Ellen.' He opened his great black eyes very wide, and said,—

‘*Già, Signorina!* it appear you shall be vere distracted dis morneen. What shall be arrive to you?’”

“Ha! ha! Poor Signor!” cried Ellen. “But, thank you for keeping me so much in your thoughts. I hear you have not been as cheerful as usual, while I was away. *E vero, carissima?* And I am so selfish as to hope it is.”

“*You* selfish! Ellen? How absurd!”

A thoughtful look came over her countenance as she replied:—“Yes, Margaret,—it is true. I am not selfish about things in which the other girls are selfish, perhaps; and that is why you think I am generous and self-denying.”

“And so you are,” I replied, warmly. “I maintain it. Generous and self-sacrificing in a thousand little every-day things. There was this very evening, when Miss Allan was putting down the bad marks for things left about the room;—your books were all lying about the table, and so were Maria Chester’s. What did you do? Put away your own books, as any one else would have done? Oh, no! You flew to put away Maria’s

books before Miss Allan saw them, because Maria wants to get the prize for *Order* this half; and yet you are trying for it yourself, and Mrs. Anderson would be so pleased if *untidy Ellen* were to get it."

"I do not see such vast generosity in that," said Ellen. "If you did but know how selfish I am when I really do care much for the thing, you would never call me generous again."

"The thing!" cried I, laughing incredulously; "what is the thing about which you are selfish?"

Ellen paused, and then said, distinctly, — "Affection. I am greedy of affection. I know, I feel, that I am selfish about that; I never knew it until to-day."

"And how did you know it to-day?" I asked.

"When we were all with Mr. Bernard this afternoon, and you sitting by Mrs. Anderson, Mary Bell was next me, and we had a little chat. She told me you were unhappy while I was away; not grave and quiet, as you often are, Margaret; but sad, so that Mrs. Anderson believed you were really ill one day. She ended by saying, that

now I was come back, she knew you would be as well as ever again. Well, Margaret, can you believe it? I never once felt regret that you had been unhappy; my only feeling was one of intense joy to think that you loved me so much."

"Why, Ellen, that was your love for me, dear; not selfishness; that is a very odd name to give it."

"It is the right name for it, I am sure," said Ellen, very gravely. "It was Mary's face at the time which made the truth flash on my mind at once."

"How did she look?"

"She looked surprised and angry; yes, a *little* angry, at my expression of unmixed pleasure. But you know it is not in Mary's nature to say a reproachful thing. It is a pity she is so stupid: she is very fond of you, Margaret. She seems to take as much pride in you as other persons do in themselves. She whispered to me once this afternoon, 'Look at Margaret, now; how beautiful she is!' It was when you were arranging the bust of Psyche for your sketch."

"I wish Mary would not talk so much about

my being beautiful," said I, rather vexed; "it is such nonsense. I am a pretty girl; I know it: I have been told so a hundred times. But there is a vast difference between being pretty and being beautiful. As Mary is my friend, everybody will think I am vain enough to suppose I am as beautiful as she says I am."

"Oh, no one will think that!" said Ellen. "And if any one did, what would that matter to you? Surely, Margaret, you do not care for what a tribe of common-place girls say of you? Besides, you are much more than merely pretty. If that were all, indeed, it would not be much. I, for my part, would just as soon be merely plain, as I am, than merely pretty, like Susan Jones, or Miss Crawford. How it provokes me to hear you and Susan spoken of together, as the two prettiest girls in the school, and Susan's appearance preferred by one half the girls! Poor silly things! But, Margaret, you have far too low an opinion of yourself, both as to person and mind. You do not like to hear that you have a graceful figure and a beautiful face, because

you fear that people will think that you value them too highly. Now I know your pride does not lie in *that* direction: yet it must be a delightful feeling—that consciousness that the mere sight of our persons is sufficient to give pleasure to others. I am sure beauty is an immense advantage; do not despise it, Margaret. I begin to see beyond our present life at school: depend upon it, beauty is the most valuable thing in the world.”

“Oh, Ellen! Intellect, goodness—”

“Yes, I know all that you would say: but, oh, Margaret!—it may be wrong, but I love beauty everywhere, better than all other things.”

“Think of the noble-minded, the—”

“Yes; all very true. But,

“A thing of beauty is a joy for ever,”

as Lewis Vaughan said of you. It is a quotation from some favourite poet of his.”

“Your cousin, that came here, do you mean?” asked I.

“Yes. He is a great admirer of everything

that is beautiful, from a blade of grass to a star ; from a fly to a human being. He said you were beautiful in the true sense of the word ; not dazzling, or striking, or startling, but full of that divine power which penetrates the soul gradually. He said that you were *harmonious*. I did not thoroughly understand all he said, but I *felt* that it was true. Lewis is young—just my age ; but he has seen and learned much, especially in poetry and art. I do not know what people mean by saying that a girl is always older for her years than a boy. Lewis and I are sixteen ; but I do not expect to be so wise and learned at twenty-six as he is now. And I think I can tell why. I shall never be sent abroad alone to make my own way among strangers—to depend on myself ; and, more than all, I shall not be obliged to study hard for a profession. Certainly, Lewis is far superior by nature to any boy I ever saw. He commands respect just like a man, for he is not bashful or conceited ; and, really, when he pronounced you to be beautiful, I listened to him as if he had been an old connoisseur.”

“ He likes you, Ellen ; and therefore he praised your friend.”

“ Oh ! that is no rule. He dispraises a great many things which I delight in. However, I hope he does like me, for I am very fond of him. His liking or not liking me has nothing to do with his admiring you as a work of art—I mean, of nature,” added she, laughing. “ If he could see you now, Margaret ! just as you are—in that old dressing-gown — with all that lovely hair streaming down to the ground—he would think you a much finer thing than all the old pictures he raves about. Why, Margaret, how you blush ! I thought you were pretty well used to my plain-spoken remarks on your exterior. There, now !—my hair is done ; so let me brush yours a little, while I tell you something about my Aunt and Uncle Vaughan. But where is Mary Bell ? Is she not coming to bed to-night ? ”

“ It is her turn to spend the evening in the drawing-room. She will not come up-stairs for an hour, I dare say ; for there is company to-night, and she will have to sing.”

"That happens very fortunately," replied Ellen, "for I have several things to tell you which I do not wish to tell her."

I wondered whether it was about Lewis Vaughan and first love ; but I was a silly girl of seventeen, remember, most sage reader. Ellen then related to me what you have already learnt of her family affairs ; although without the remarks which an after-knowledge of the parties has enabled me to make. When she had finished, I asked, "And what is your uncle going to do in town ?"

"He has an appointment, at present, in some government office. Aunt Constance says the salary is small. She did not say how much, and I did not like to ask. Of course it cannot be less than 500*l.* a year. I have heard papa say 500*l.* a year is absolute beggary, and my uncle does not seem so *very* poor. They are living in a nice neat little house at Brompton. It is small, to be sure, and they keep only one servant ; but any house in which Aunt Constance lived would seem rich and agreeable ; she is so noble-looking, and has such gracious manners. You would like her

so! She bears this change so cheerfully! And my uncle, too, looks much happier and better than he used to look."

"That must be because he is out of suspense. Do you think, Ellen, that money causes all the happiness and misery that old people and books say it does?"

"No," replied Ellen, with the unhesitating confidence of early youth. "How should it? It can never give or take away the best things in this world—beauty, intellect, affection, goodness."

"But are you quite sure it does not increase the influence of all these?"

"I should hope not. What should I care if I were to become poor to-morrow? I might have petty annoyances that, while papa has a fortune, I shall never be exposed to. Margaret, I have thought about a great many things during the past fortnight. A great change has taken place in me. I begin to wish that I were quite poor—obliged to be a teacher or a dress-maker—that I might see people as they really are, and be valued for what I am. It would be better for me; I

should get then what I have heard is the only true wisdom—that which comes by experience. Yes, I wish I were poor !”

“You, Ellen ! You, who appreciate so strongly all the graceful luxuries of life—who seem born to lavish wealth and to enjoy it. You, to whom dirt, and noise, and coarseness, are so loathsome, and all refinement so congenial. Nonsense, Ellen ! Poverty would not suit you at all.”

“I do not say that I should love poverty ; but I should like to have the knowledge which nothing but poverty can bring.”

“Well, you have grown wondrous philosophical during the last fortnight. You talk as if you were no longer a young girl. Is this your aunt’s teaching ?”

“Partly,” replied Ellen, laughingly. “Her teaching by example, and Lewis’s by precept—not to me indeed, but to his sister Constance, whom he teaches (she is about thirteen). Do you not think we are all very ready to take instruction when given to another which we should not attend to if offered directly to our-

selves? Once, while Lewis was giving Constance her usual lesson, I was within hearing; but he did not know that. He began, *à propos* of something, to talk to her very seriously about her prospects in life. He set before her all the moral advantages which her altered position in society would give her. She cried bitterly, poor child! After a little while she sobbed out that she did not mind so much being obliged to teach, if she might live with papa and mamma; but she could not bear to go away and live in another person's house, and have to teach children who were as idle and as rude as she and her sister were to poor Miss Allan when she was with them. She could never forgive herself for her unfeeling rudeness to poor Miss Allan, now that she should never see her again. I never liked Constance till that moment. She was a spoiled, disagreeable, self-sufficient little thing, and was a great torment to sweet Miss Allan (whom I never saw, you know, till she came here); but this remorse made me quite love the child. I believe she is to come here to school."

“Comment donc, mes enfans ! Vous n’êtes pas encore couchées !” cried the lively voice of Madame d’Almette, as she came into the room to see that our light was safely put out. “Mais, ma chère Elène ! voilà que tu causes—tu causes—tout comme une petite fille ; et cette méchante Marguérite qui reste là, en robe-de-chambre à t’écouter—Ce que c’est que l’amitié ! Cela ne se fatigue jamais. Vite, vite, au lit ! Voilà dix heures qui sonnent ! Embrasses-moi, ma chère Elène ; je suis bien aise de te revoir. Et tu ne pleures pas parceque tu est revenue en pension ? C’est bien. Je ne puis souffrir les pleurnicheuses, moi. Couches-toi, ma belle Marguérite. Dieu ! comme elle est jolie en bonnet-de-nuit ! Bon soir. Il ne faut plus parler, car la pauvre Mademoiselle Jones est fort malade dans la chambre voisine. Bon soir !”

“Bon soir, madame ; nous ne parlerons plus.”

And we kept our promise.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FRENCH TEACHER.

IN one respect, at least, Madame d'Almette was unlike the generality of French teachers in an English boarding-school. She was not uneducated and vulgar. She had not been a *couturière* or a *marchande de modes*, a *femme de chambre*, or a *bonne d'enfans*. She was the widow of a Parisian physician; she was poor, but well-bred and well-taught. Like many French ladies of the present day, who have any pretensions to being *instruite*, she desired to learn English. After her husband's death she came to England with her only child, a boy of eleven, whom she placed in a boys' school, in the neighbourhood of Avenue House; for she was determined that Ernest should speak "L'Anglais bien pur."

Her selection of a school for her son was influenced by Mrs. Anderson, whom she had known and esteemed in her early youth, when Mrs. Anderson came to Paris, on a visit to her father and mother. Indeed it was Mrs. Anderson who first gave her a desire to know English, and to see England. She had always kept up an epistolary correspondence with her; and when M. d'Almette died, and left her a very slender income, and a son to establish in the world, she offered herself as a French teacher in her old friend's establishment, who happened at that time to want a person competent to fill that office, and had applied to her to recommend one. Mrs. Anderson esteemed herself fortunate in obtaining a person so superior to the average of French teachers in England, and did everything in her power to mitigate the cares and sorrows of the young widow. She selected an excellent school for her boy, and made him as happy as possible during the holidays, which he spent with his "chère petite maman" at Avenue House. Often, too, during the half

year, the youthful Ernest came to spend an afternoon with his mother, and upon the whole their lives passed happily while they were in England, and they loved each other the more for being alone among strangers. Ernest was a sweet, intelligent boy, of the most vivacious temperament, — bright and refreshing to look upon, — with a clear olive complexion, and long curling brown hair, which, to please his mother, who was proud of his *chevelure*, he always arranged in nice order before paying her a visit. This exposed him to the jibes and jeers of his unsentimental school-fellows, who would, on such occasions, call after him : — “ Look at the Frenchman’s wig ! ” — “ I say, d’Almette, give us a lock of your hair ! ” — “ Long hair hides long ears ! ” and similar expressions of school-boy satire. However, Ernest was too brave a lad to be laughed or teased out of trying to please his mother ; he let them say what they pleased, not restricting himself to extraordinary mildness in his replies, which were sometimes as forcible as his two fists could make them. On one occasion,

when a boy called him "a sweet young lady," and requested to have the pleasure of "combing his hair for him," Ernest turned fiercely upon him, tore off his jacket, and cried out,—"*Viens ici, chien ! Si je me coiffe en demoiselle, je te battraï en homme !*" and he was as good as his word ; he came to his mother with two black eyes, I remember. But enough of Ernest at present.

Madame d'Almette was very *French*. By the way, that is generally said of every clever Frenchwoman. You could never mistake her for a woman of any other nation. Perhaps there are no people so thoroughly *national* as the French. They are perfectly contented with their own manners, customs, country, and language. You never heard a Frenchman wish he was a native of any other country. It is not a very rare thing to hear English people wish they had been born German, or French, or Italian—or to hear Germans or Italians wish that they had been born English or French. I do not mean to say that they cherish a deep-rooted desire to belong to another nation, but that a momentary wish of

the kind is sometimes formed in their minds ;—in the French, I think such a wish is never formed. Dear reader, I do not hold this notion of mine very firmly. Produce me one authentic instance of a Frenchman who does not thank God, in his daily discourse, for having made him “French” and not “*barbarian*” (using the word as the Greeks of old), and I give it up at once. Even then I must repeat my opinion, that Madame d’Almette considered it a compliment to be told that she was “*bien Française*,”—a compliment second only to that crowning point of French praise awarded to the external “*Elle a l’air Parisien*.” This, too, was with great justice applied to Madame d’Almette. She was born in Paris, and had never been twenty miles from Paris until she came to England. She had the clear, quick *retrécie* pronunciation—the very *veillée* countenance—the tiny pit-pat step—and the *manières distinguées* of a Parisian lady. She was not *jolie*, but *gentille*, *spirituelle*, *charmante*,—with all that indescribable something which makes the afore-named

manière distinguée, the *manière agréable*. Now, although this manner is always easy, it never degenerates into the "free and easy," as an English *easy manner* too often does, and thereby becomes anything but *distinguée*.

Madame d'Almette often gave the elder girls a few useful hints on manners. Like every other accomplishment, it requires cultivation on sound principles. These principles, well understood and thoroughly carried out, will produce variations in manner in accordance with individual minds; but the general tone will be the same among all really polite people. All Madame d'Almette's observations tended to prove that the best practical Christian was the politest person,—that to be really *polite*, you must have an habitual, never-failing consideration for others, and the habit of keeping your own selfishness in continual subjection. She taught, that to consider yourself first was savage,—to consider others before oneself was civilised. She did not deny that some persons have a power beyond others of being gracefully

polite. She said it came from a peculiar organisation of mind—just as some persons walk, or sit, or stand more gracefully than others.

I have heard her speak with some surprise and a little disgust of the *manière sans gêne* of several English ladies she had met with in society, whom, from position and education, she would have supposed above the common vulgar error, that a perfect freedom from restraint in company is a mark of high breeding and good taste. She thought this fault of manner more objectionable because more positively offensive to others, than the proverbial silent cold stiffness of our countrywomen. To say by your manner, “You are a stranger,—I dread you,—I suspect you,—I do not wish to make your acquaintance,” is certainly a degree less rude and unfeeling, than to say by manner, “Pray understand that I have not the slightest reverence for *you*,—your presence is no restraint to me; I pay no regard to it,—I think myself quite as good as you.”

Madame d’Almette was herself too polite to tell us in direct terms that the English in general

had bad manners, but we could not help inferring it from her criticism ; and thoroughly English as I am in taste and education, I must confess that I have often blushed for my countrymen in the company of French people.

Madame d'Almette had a firm conviction that French was the most charming language spoken since the building of Babel. She knew it well, and taught it well. From her, we elder girls gained some notion of the singular merit of the language as a medium of conversation. We saw that everything, nay, even nothing, could be discussed in French,—talked about with wit,—happy allusion and expressions,—and with a certain verbal sparkling peculiar to the language. Madame d'Almette was a favourite with us all. She was lively, energetic, and anxious for our improvement ; she was kind and caressing in her manner, especially to the little ones. Her epithets sounded sweet and endearing,—“ *mon enfant*,” “ *ma petite*,” “ *minette*,” “ *petite vaut-rien*,” “ *pauvre chère*.” She would often set us laughing, in the midst of our lessons, by an

attempt to scold a little girl in English,—“Come eere Mees! Tell to me, just now, what for you are not *sage*. You shall oblige me of to put you in the penitence. Ah! you are a bad leetle shile! I not been able to lof you! Your papa, your mamma not been able to lof you,—not been able to suffer you. What for you so *paresseuse*? Oh! I am quite shocking wid you! (Here the little girl would vainly endeavour to repress a smile.) *Mais! Mais!* you *mock* of me Mees!! *Petite méchante!* vous comprenez tres-bien,—c’est malhonnête. It is dishonest; you understand, *dishonest*, Mees! Bad leetle shile! I am not content. Go away, *allez-vous-en*, vere fast!”

One day during an Easter or Michaelmas holiday, Miss Stuart proposed that Madame should go with her to see the Tower of London. I thought Madame did not seem very eager to go, and I ventured to tell her that I thought she would like to see the Tower, and that it would be a great advantage to go with such a person as Miss Stuart, who would explain all the antiquities

and curiosities there ; to which Madame d'Almette replied, slightly elevating her eyebrows, "*C'est justement, cela !* It is dat, *ma chère*. *Elle est si instruite !* I know vere well she will give me explications à *propos de tout*. Oh, she will make large erudition, and I shall break my head not to say some large silliness !"

She was very fond of finding out English phrases for herself. For instance, one day she wanted *du fil gris*, to mend a gown. To avoid puzzling the housemaid, who was to buy it, by mispronouncing the English words, she determined to write them on a piece of paper. She knew that *fil* was *thread*, and she also knew that in English the adjective comes before the substantive ; but then she did not know the English for this adjective, *gris* ;—so she looked it out from a dictionary ; here she found, as usual, several English words ; and, selecting that which to her ear sounded the most *recherché*, she wrote down, "Some tipsy thread !" The astonished shopkeeper sent a message, intimating that he did not sell such an article.

Her idiomatic translations, misapplication of words, mispronunciation of words, were very amusing. I wish I could recal half the things which she said worth remembering.

She would frequently say to a girl, "Be attentive; do not walk your eyes over the room." She once complained of some paper as being too *meagre*. At dinner, she would ask for "*the waiter*," instead of the water; and when she wished to say she would take no more, she would inform Mrs. Anderson, with a gentle smile, that she "would not take the advantage."

After a year's residence among us, she began to speak English without gross errors, although I am happy to say she never lost her French accent, which was very charming.

Madame d'Almette was *encore jeune*, that is, she was little more than thirty. She had a lively countenance, and a pretty little figure, always set off by a *toilette*, simple but elegant, sometimes even *coquette*. But the *coquetterie* of dress costs money, and therefore she only adopted it when Mrs. Anderson had company in the evening, or

when she went out with that lady. I have heard from very good authority, that Madame d'Almette might have changed her name several times during her residence in England, but she preferred living for her son, and, as I once heard her say, "D'ailleurs, l'Angleterre n'est pas gai comme la France ; on ne s'y amuse pas bien ;—et les Anglais sont tant soit peu silencieux et maussade."

CHAPTER X.

THE ENGLISH TEACHER.

How shall I describe Miss Stuart? To say that she was the first English teacher, or superintendent of the school, would not be to imply any very great degree of superiority; because such an office is, I know, often filled by a very incompetent person. To think of Miss Stuart as one of a class, is beyond my cogitative power; she always comes before my mind alone; she was, perhaps, more remarkable for individuality, or what is called peculiarity of character, than for anything else, and without the slightest affectation of the uncommon or eccentric, she was certainly different from other people. This I did not observe while I had the good fortune to be her pupil, but I discovered it afterwards.

Miss Stuart was about five-and-thirty years of age at the time I was fifteen. I do not think she ever could have been handsome, and she certainly was not handsome then. She was tall, but not majestic; on the contrary, she was singularly unpretending in her movements and deportment. Her head was large, but refined and intellectual in shape, with a lofty broad forehead, and a profusion of black hair, which was already beginning to turn grey. This hair was worn in a style equally uncommon and unbecoming; but Miss Stuart heeded not "the sweet amenities of dress." It was parted in front, and pushed back from her forehead in such a manner as to give the idea of having been so disposed preparatory to washing her face. So much for the effect in front; behind, the whole *chevelure*, which was short and thick, was gathered to the top of her head in a careless heap of twists, which were anything but smooth. There was no visible support to the edifice in the shape of pins, combs, or ribands; and strangers were always struck by the apparent insecurity of the thing, and those who

were good-natured would generally whisper, in a warning tone, "I think, Ma'am, your hair is unfastened," or "your hair will come down;" to which she would reply by shaking her head in order to prove the contrary, and adding, "Yes, it always looks so; but you see it is quite firm;—we must not always judge by appearances, you see."

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Miss Stuart had the two most important requisites for a good teacher—indomitable patience, and experience in teaching. I have since discovered that the amount of her knowledge was really nothing very prodigious among the learned. She has often told me since, that the best teachers are those who can the best conceal their ignorance. At first, I was startled by such a proposition, but now I recognise its truth. Nor does this admission lead at all to the inference that Miss Stuart was ignorant; on the contrary, no person who was not very well informed could have filled her place for a single day. It is to the advantage of the learner to have unbounded confidence in the knowledge of the teacher, and a great

disadvantage not to have such confidence. The larger the faith, the higher the advancement. This matter requires farther elucidation, I am aware: this is not, however, the place for a serious disquisition on faith in preceptors. All people much engaged in teaching young persons will, I am sure, acknowledge the truth of my assertion, although, like most great truths, it borders on a dangerous falsehood.

It was necessary to have all sorts of knowledge at her command for momentary use and application. She was liable to be assailed by the most puzzling, the most various, the most unanswerable questions, asked by children of different ages and capacities, simultaneously (or nearly so), and all requiring immediate replies, suited to the comprehension of the inquirer. For example:—

“If you please, Miss Stuart, how was America peopled?”

“Oh, Miss Stuart, will you be so kind as to tell me what is the ablative absolute?”

“Will you tell me why salt water does not freeze?”

“ Was Charles the First a good or a bad man ? ”

“ Which was the best race—the Dorians or the Ionians ? ”

“ What is the precession of the equinoxes ? ”

“ How deep is the sea ? ”

“ When was Constantinople taken from the Turks ? ”

“ What makes quicksilver run about so ? ”

“ Why has not Mars any moons ? ”

To such heterogeneous interrogatories Miss Stuart was seldom at a loss to give a clear, prompt answer. This gave the girls great faith in her knowledge. Whenever she was not able to reply readily, she would say at once, “ I do not know, my dear, but I will try and find out for you.” When ignorance is gracefully acknowledged, it is seldom a reproach.

Miss Stuart had considerable humour, though her general manner was grave ; and she would often tell us amusing stories, which never failed to bear upon some fault which she wished to see corrected in one of her listeners, although it was

rare for her to refer to any one present. She was a favourite with nearly all of the girls; she was treated with great respect and consideration by Mrs. Anderson, and consequently by every one else in the house. We knew nothing of her life before she came to Mrs. Anderson's school, except, indeed, that she was an old friend of Mrs. Anderson, and had known my mamma. This circumstance made her dear to me, to whom she was particularly kind. She never spoke of herself or her life to the girls. We knew that she had travelled much, and that she had friends in India. She seldom went out to pay visits, and seldom received any. It never entered into our heads that Miss Stuart, our teacher, was destined to become anything else. But she was,—and her destiny fulfilled itself, like that of other persons.

CHAPTER XI.

MISS CRAWFORD AND MISS ALLAN.

I RECOLLECT very well the circumstances in which I first saw Miss Allan, the second English teacher. It was about six or eight months before the unexpected visit of Mrs. Vaughan and Lewis at Avenue House. Miss Allan had been governess to Mrs. Vaughan's children until Dr. Vaughan gave up practice in Newcastle. She then came as teacher to Avenue House, at Mrs. Warwick's recommendation. Ellen had never seen Miss Allan, and had heard nothing of the new arrangement by which her cousin's governess was to become one of our teachers. It was a bright spring morning. Ellen Warwick, Mary Bell, and I (not yet as much attached to each other as we became afterwards) were seated on one side of the long table in the Grey Room,

engaged in drawing ; opposite to us, at the same table, were Laura Harrington and Susanna Jones, also drawing ; that is, they had copies, pencils, and paper before them. Laura was sitting with both her elbows on the table, and her chin propped on her hands ; her eyes were open, but she was looking at nothing particular, and evidently thinking of the same thing. Susanna was arranging her ringlets by the aid of a pocket-mirror (her favourite *vade mecum*), which she put up before the landscape she should have been copying ; from time to time she cast a furtive glance behind her, to ascertain that Miss Crawford was not looking. No, her attention was absorbed in the performance of “ Ah, vous dirai-je ? ” by a little girl, and therefore Susan could give one more twirl to those two favourite locks, which, like Belinda’s, “ graceful hung behind.”

Suddenly the door opened ; Susanna blushed, and could scarcely extricate her fingers from the precious curl in her confusion, for she believed the intruder was Mrs. Anderson. But it was only Grace Wilson, who rushed into the room

brimful of news, if we were to judge by her face. We all looked up with the eager curiosity of school-girls, as she said, in a loud whisper,

“What *do* you think?”

“What?—what?” we inquired, in the same tone, to escape the observation of Miss Crawford.

“Why, the new teacher has come!”

“Well, what is she like? Does she look cross? Is she very old? Is she pretty? What is her name? Have you seen her?”

Poor Grace! She soon lost her momentary importance in our eyes, for she could answer none of these questions. She answered, “Why, I have not seen her myself, exactly; but I met Inez Oliveira on the stairs just now, and she has seen her, for she has been taking her singing lesson in the drawing-room, and the new teacher was there, talking to Mrs. Anderson. Inez says, ‘She is a vare tall leddy, in a black frock.’ That’s all I know,” concluded Grace.

We began to speculate about the stranger on the strength of this information, and whispers went round,—

"I wonder when we shall see her," said one.

"I'm sure I shan't like her," said another.

"I hate tall women," said Susanna, putting away her little glass. "It is very masculine to be tall. Don't you think so, Miss Warwick?"

"Yes;—to be a tall man."

"No; now, you know what I mean very well!"

"If you mean that a woman becomes masculine as she becomes tall, I cannot agree with you, Susan. At that rate, you will be more masculine next year than you are this."

"Well, I hope I never shall be masculine in anything," said Susan, fervently.

"I do not think you need have any fear on that score," said Ellen, with a slightly arch expression of face.

"I do so detest *black*," said Laura, rubbing her fingers lazily over her face, and leaving sable marks of the chalk she had been cutting on every feature; "I wish people would never wear *black*."

"On their faces, certainly," said Ellen.

"Why, who ever does wear it on their faces?"

said Laura, opening her large blue eyes very wide, so that their white contrasted in a ludicrous manner with the dark marks below.

"Some ladies in Queen Anne's time did formerly, and one lady of my acquaintance does now."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Laura, incredulously; then seeing a smile on every countenance, she said, in a drawling, reproachful tone, "Ah! now you are all making fun of me again!"

"Ha! ha! ha! No, no, Laura; you have made all the fun yourself."

"Why, what did I say?" said she; and in her anxiety to discover the cause of our mirth, she rubbed her hands again over her face, and thereby made matters worse, increasing our laughter to the reprehensible pitch.

Miss Crawford's voice arose. "Silence, young ladies! What is all that noise about?" At first no one could speak for laughing, and as Laura's back was turned towards Miss Crawford, the latter could not see the cause of our merriment. After a few moments I became grave

enough to reply,—“Laura has blacked her face all over, Ma’am, and it is impossible to help laughing; she looks so droll.”

“Miss Laura,” quoth the teacher, with offended dignity, “I am quite surprised at such conduct. If you are idle yourself, you should not endeavour to make others idle.”

Poor Laura was utterly confounded at this attack. She pushed her straggling hair off her face with her dirty fingers, and added a few finishing touches to her former work, and then, turning round to Miss Crawford with a look of indignant, injured innocence, she exclaimed, angrily, (Laura, like many lazy persons, was passionate when roused,) “I do not know what Miss Granby means by saying, I have blacked my face! Just look at it yourself, Ma’am;” and she thrust her face forward for Miss Crawford’s inspection. The effect of this tone and action, united, was irresistibly comic, and Miss Crawford burst into a fit of laughter. Laura was at all times ridiculous; but now she was ten times more ridiculous than usual, as she looked first at

Miss Crawford, and then at us, quite aghast and stupid. It was clear she did not see the point of the jest. This, of course, did not lessen our mirth; the tears rolled down our cheeks, and we leaned against each other for support, in sheer exhaustion; while little Grace reeled about the room as if she were actually tipsy with mirth, and went stamping her little feet, the better to give vent to her feelings.

Precisely at this posture of affairs the door was opened, and Mrs. Anderson, with a tall lady in black, entered the room. Here was a state of things! In the middle of school-time, half a dozen girls, with a teacher at their head, utterly oblivious of lessons, and unable to speak for laughter! And this, when the school-mistress had come to present a new teacher with all due formality. How very astonished Mrs. Anderson looked! Miss Crawford recovered herself the first, and, pointing to Laura, she said, with strong symptoms of a return of her laughing fit, "Laura has made herself such a ridiculous figure that it is impossible to help laughing at

her." At this Laura stared with astonishment, and, looking at Mrs. Anderson, she asked, "What is the matter with them all, Ma'am?" This showed Mrs. Anderson how matters stood, and although evidently amused at Laura's appearance, she only smiled and sent her out of the room to wash her face. As soon as she was gone, and our gravity restored, Mrs. Anderson introduced "the lady in black" to Miss Crawford, as "Miss Allan, your new colleague." She then presented us in succession. I thought the stranger looked with interest at Ellen Warwick, but Ellen had forgotten the name of Allan, as she told me afterwards. After staying a few minutes, to be sure that order was restored, Mrs. Anderson left the room with the new teacher.

We had made good use of our eyes in these few minutes, and when she was gone a number of remarks were made on Miss Allan's personal appearance :—

"What a monster!"—"I'm sure she is six feet high!"—"But she does not look awkward!"

—"I think she is handsome!"—"Yes, rather interesting!"—"Oh! so tall and masculine!" cried Susan Jones.—"She looks very cross!"—"Oh! I do not think so, at all!"—"She looks very proud, I think!"—"Oh! not proud; only unhappy!" said Ellen, who had not yet spoken; "I wonder who she is in mourning for!"

Miss Crawford had overheard these remarks, and in answer to Ellen's observation, said, "Pray, Miss Warwick, do not be so very sentimental!" She had an instinctive dislike to Ellen, and always *snubbed* her whenever she could. Such treatment Ellen generally took quietly; at other times she became irritated, and resented Miss Crawford's speeches with all the flippancy of a clever school-girl, who knows herself to be more than a match for those set over her when it comes to a wordy war. This time she was insubordinate, and remarked that "she did not see anything very sentimental in wondering who people were in mourning for. She should certainly take care not to express any interest in the matter if

she should chance to see Miss Crawford in mourning."

To this piece of girlish pertness that lady replied that "she should not put up with such rudeness," &c., &c.; and concluded by ordering Ellen to leave the room. To this Ellen replied, that "she had not yet finished her drawing, and Mrs. Anderson had ordered her not to leave the Grey Room until it was finished." She added in a tone of mock respect, "Shall I go and ask which Mrs. Anderson thinks I ought to do—to leave the room as you wish, or to finish my drawing as she ordered?"

Miss Crawford was provoked, and did not act wisely. Instead of sending Ellen on this errand, which would certainly have terminated in that young lady's discomfiture,—for Mrs. Anderson was too judicious not to support the authority of her teachers,—she merely told Ellen, in an angry tone, "to remain where she was," and that "she was to have two bad marks for impertinence."

I watched Ellen's face as she bent again over

her drawing ; it was not insolent or triumphant, but it wore a satirical sneer. Alas ! how often is such an expression called up in a youthful countenance by injudicious treatment ! It is a sad thing for the young when they cannot respect those set in authority over them. It is a dangerous trial to the character to feel ourselves superior to our pastors and masters, or to our task-masters, at any time of life ; but in early youth, such a feeling almost always begets presumption and arrogance, which are impediments to all sterling excellence. However, I had no such ideas then ; for I well remember whispering to Ellen, " That is right ! I am so glad you got the best of it ! " Her countenance was a little flushed, but it resumed its wonted expression as she said, " Poor Miss Crawford ! She is not worth a contest. I have lowered myself by conquering her."

" How proud you are, Ellen ! "

" Yes, too proud to triumph over such a poor, weak thing as that."

" What are you two young ladies talking

about?" inquired Miss Crawford, approaching us with every mark of angry suspicion in her face and manner.

"About you, ma'am," replied Ellen, without any rudeness of tone, but firmly and calmly.

"And pray, what were you saying about me?"

"I would rather not repeat what we said, ma'am," replied Ellen.

"Perhaps, Miss Granby, you will be so condescending as to repeat the conversation," said Miss Crawford with considerable venom.

I declined doing so.

"Indeed! and may I ask *why* you refuse?"

"Because you would not like to hear what we said of you."

"Now, I insist upon knowing, young ladies!" cried Miss Crawford, passionately. "Will you tell me, or will you not?" We each answered that we would not. "Then," said she, "come directly with me to Mrs. Anderson." We both rose and followed her out of the room. As we left it, I saw Mary Bell with a face of sorrow;—

she disliked contention, and feared that we should be punished. Susanna Jones looked mystified;—she was always dull at understanding anything but dress. Little Grace Wilson made a hideous grimace behind Miss Crawford, whom she cordially detested; and then she slipped quietly past us;—of course she was going immediately to the school-room to spread the news that “Miss Granby and Miss Warwick had got into such a scrape!”

We followed our angry conductor to Mrs. Anderson’s private sitting-room. We found her in conversation with the new teacher; but Miss Crawford was far too angry to be checked by the presence of a stranger. She began in a loud voice, “Can I speak a word or two with you, ma’am?”

“Yes, certainly,” said Mrs. Anderson, looking first at the excited querist, and then at Ellen and me. “Is anything the matter?”

Miss Crawford was beginning her story, regardless of the astonished gaze of the stranger, when Mrs. Anderson interrupted her. “I beg

your pardon, Miss Crawford. One moment. My dear Miss Allan, this conversation will not be interesting to you, I dare say. You would, perhaps, like to go to your room. Miss Granby, show Miss Allan to the little North Room, and return here directly."

As I walked up stairs and along the gallery with "the tall lady in black," I forgot the scene I should have to encounter on my return. There is something overawing in superior height. All children and young persons feel this. I was thinking to myself, "How very tall she is, and how very like a queen she walks," when I heard a gentle, full-toned voice speaking to me.

"I hope this affair is nothing very serious."

"Not very, ma'am," said I.

"Which of you is in fault?"

"Neither Ellen nor I; Miss Crawford is very foolish and absurd."

"Bold words for a pupil!" said Miss Allan, smiling. "However, when you are at liberty, if it is not unpleasant to you, I should like to hear this little matter."

"I will tell you willingly, ma'am; when shall I come to you?"

"As soon as your lessons are finished. Oh, *this* is my room! Thank you, my dear; now run back; do not keep Mrs. Anderson waiting."

"What a sweet creature," thought I, as I returned. "I'm sure I shall like her."

Mrs. Anderson administered a gentle reproof to us both for talking at improper times, and for saying what we were ashamed to repeat; but she said that she had neither the right nor the desire to force us to tell what we wished to keep secret. She then dismissed us, and Miss Crawford remained with her, "to be well scolded, as she deserved," Grace Wilson thought.

After school-time that morning, I asked Ellen to go with me to the new teacher. At first she hesitated; "she did not like," "it was pushing herself forward," &c. I overcame her scruples, and we went arm in arm to the door of the little North Room. I knocked; the same gentle full-toned voice said, "Come in." I opened the door, and said, "I have brought Ellen Warwick,

ma'am—may she come in too?" "By all means;" and we went in and closed the door behind us, with a slight feeling of timidity.

That little North Room!—called a *room* by courtesy, for it was no bigger than a closet. What a diminutive dormitory! with its little window, its little bed, its little table, its *very* little glass, its little washing-stand, its little bit of carpet, and its single cane-bottomed chair. How unsuited it looked to its new occupant, who was as large as the room was small!

I have seldom seen so noble a woman, so graceful or so gracious a lady, as Caroline Allan. She was twenty-three years of age then; but, from habitual thought and early trouble, she looked older, although her cheek had lost little of its bloom or roundness. She was not strictly speaking handsome, and yet I never saw a more charming face. It was so expressive of sincerity and goodness. She had a profusion of the most lovely bright brown hair, and eyes to match—eyes so honest, they could look you steadily in the face; while they were so full of feeling, that their very

colour seemed to vary with every emotion. She had a clear fair complexion—a nose of no particular order, but *not* retroussé—good teeth, a beautiful throat, and small hands and feet. As Madame d'Almette used to say of her, she was “une belle blonde, bien née, bien élevée, bien aimable, et bien Anglaise.” She was gentle, patient, soft-hearted, and strong-minded. She had a sound and enlarged, though not a brilliant intellect. She was one of those favoured few who get golden opinions from all sorts of people, without going out of the even tenor of their way to do it.

She listened to our little story attentively, while Ellen told it with her usual simplicity and fluency. Miss Allan coloured violently, and her eyes filled with tears when she heard about “the mourning” which Ellen mentioned with great delicacy; but she took Ellen's hand, as if grateful for her sympathy, and held it till she had finished. Then with a kind look, she said, “I judged rightly by your countenances; you were not much in fault. But you are both old enough to know that your

teachers have much to try their tempers; and to girls of your age, who are in fact young women, and not children, they should look for co-operation, and not opposition. I will not keep you longer now. Good-bye for the present. I trust we shall be friends." So saying, she stooped down and kissed us each on the forehead.

Sweet Caroline Allan! What an irresistible charm there was in your dignified manner! It was so sovereign-gracious, so humble-majestic, without the insult of condescension. In most cases a dignified manner, as it is called, is a ludicrous failure in the eyes of the discerning. How can sensible, well-bred people, see anything but matter for laughter in the solemn strut, the self-complacent gravity, assumed by some piece of pompous inanity, male or female, under the delusion that *that* is dignity. Just as if dignity were not as much part and parcel of a human being as vivacity or dulness, or tallness or shortness. But even where dignity of manner is real that is, *natural*, it is generally far from pleasing, either in man or woman. It is offensive to the

self-love of others. I think, as a general rule, most other manners are to be preferred. The gentle, the open, the unassuming, the lively; and, most of all, the *deferential*. I have never seen a dignified manner that did not either repel me at first, or make me very much inclined to laugh, except in the single instance of Miss Allan. Her dignity had an attraction, a fascination in it; you wished to draw nearer to her, and not to move your seat farther off.

Sweet Caroline Allan ! The day you came to Mrs. Anderson's school was the day from which Ellen and I date our mutual friendship, and our admiration and love for you—and Miss Crawford's dislike of all three. She could not forgive us for liking each other.

CHAPTER XII.

A JOURNEY ROUND THE SCHOOL-ROOM.

IN humble imitation of the author of "*Un Voyage autour de ma Chambre*," I invite you, dear reader, to accompany me on a journey round the school-room. Our journey will differ in some material points from that of M. de Maistre. It will be neither as clever nor as discursive; moreover, it will not be as long. This journey will not be altogether uninteresting, dear reader, because, if you have never visited the country before, or, to speak in less figurative language, if you never have been a school-girl, you may be curious to know what sort of school-room we had at Avenue House; and, if you do know the country—that is, if you have been a school-girl—the chapter may have the charm of old association, and be to you a sort of "*Yarrow Revisited*."

One little preliminary must be settled; viz., the mode of travelling. M. de Maistre made the journey round his room "en voiture;" that is to say, seated in his *fauteuil*, in which he wheeled, or *said* he wheeled, himself from one part of the room to another. We cannot travel in that fashion; first, because there are no such *voitures* in the land we are about to explore; and next, because it would be very presumptuous to attempt a journey exactly in the style of M. de Maistre. It will better accord with propriety for us to make a pedestrian tour.

We have now reached the confines of the country; the door is open, and we enter. The prospect is pleasing; a lofty room, about thirty-five feet long and twenty-five broad. No lack of population, or "the hum of *girls*." This confuses the stranger at first, and I must wait until you, my amiable companion, have become a little accustomed to this new region before I point out things and persons in detail.

As to the general bearings, you will observe that the door by which you enter is situated

exactly in the middle of one of the longer sides of the apartment, and on the opposite side are three windows, one immediately facing the door. Having entered, we will close the door—a thing more easily said than done, owing to the infirm state of the poor old lock, which has been subject to violent usage every day of its life. The door is painted to represent mahogany; at least, so I was given to understand, but I cannot say it has ever been my lot to see mahogany of that very carrot colour. On this door are many curious designs, literary and pictorial, which we must not pass by unnoticed. They are relics of a bye-gone age—monuments of art perpetrated by a race of school-boys, by whom, as tradition tells, Avenue House was inhabited some twenty years before the time of my abode there. Sublime above all, appears that specimen of the *genus* pedagogue, with hair dressed *à la* porcupine, and ears erect, *à l'âne*. He has been endowed with a pair of compasses for legs, and with a book for a body; one arm is a very obtuse, the other a very acute angle; in the fingers of one hand is a goose-quill,

in the other a tremendous birch. The juvenile artist evidently intended this work for immortality ; it is cut too deeply into the wood to be hidden by all the coats of paint which the door has received since he achieved it. This fascinating picture we girls considered as a genuine portrait of Dr. Gray, the schoolmaster. Doubtless the youthful genius was rewarded according to his merit. Look at that ship, with all her sails set, making for that group of boys who are standing in a *nonchalant* manner on their heads, with their hands in their pockets ; over the feet of each boy is inscribed two letters, probably the initials of his name. Here is a performance of Maria Chester's—a caricature of M. Pirouette with his violin. Did ever man or monkey dance a *pas seul* in such a style ? Oh, Maria, you must have been very bitter against your master when you did that, and I think you remember how you were punished for it. It would take more time than we can afford to decypher that maze of initials, faces, names, animals, and portraits of things, neither in heaven above nor in the earth beneath. Many

times did Mrs. Anderson threaten to have a new door, but somehow we all liked it, and prayed that it might remain, and year after year passed, and still the old door hung on its hinges and made mirth for us.

On turning to the right, from the door, there is a clear space of wall, upon which we can see the paper of the room, which is a lively stripe of lilac and green—not very elegant, nor very much otherwise. Close to the wall stands a low form for little girls, and over their heads, on the wall, hangs a map of England and Wales, which is much smeared by the energetic rubbing of little fingers in the finding out of places. Next to this low form, a higher form stands against the wall, the end of which reaches nearly to the top of the room. On the wall above it hangs a map of France, which is pure and unsullied when compared to the aforementioned chart of our native land. In front of this form stands a table about six feet long, and on the other side of this table stands another form. These forms and the table are painted black, as are all others in the room. This

particular table is called Miss Stuart's, because that lady's chair is placed at its upper end, with its back to the wall, at the top of the apartment. Over her chair is suspended a large historical chart, and in the corner at her side, a large celestial globe. At this long table did we elder girls assemble on either side, to be taught, in classes, by Miss Stuart. In most of these classes Ellen Warwick, as top of the first class, sat next to Miss Stuart, on the right hand; Kate Murray, Maria Chester, Caroline Webster, Matilda Russell, Rose Wilson, myself, and others, took our places according to merit. In that old-fashioned arm-chair Miss Stuart sat nearly the whole day, teaching us with unfailing perseverance, and making her way into our hearts precisely in proportion to the length of time we remained in her classes, and to the amount of daily communication between us. Those girls who did not know her much, did not like her much.

As soon as we pass Miss Stuart's corner we come upon the fire-place, which is large and comfortable; that is, it would be comfortable if

it were not for an enormous wire-fence, called a guard, which embraces the whole, and effectually keeps us all at a safe distance. That poor guard ! It got many a spiteful kick from a cross, cold girl ; but, like all inevitable evils of this life, it was endured. Over the fire-place, in an ebony frame, is suspended a long list of school-room rules concerning order, punctuality, silence, &c., which we all broke as often as we could break them with impunity. On the mantel-piece stands an old chronometer, which really does keep time. On the other side of the fire-place stands another chair and another long table, flanked by forms, corresponding in all respects with Miss Stuart's, except that it has more light, because it stands across one of the three windows. This is Mrs. Anderson's table, at which she presides over those young ladies who are engaged in needlework or writing. Mrs. Anderson was a very superior woman, and did not pretend to teach things of which she knew little ; she, therefore, left the management of lessons and classes to Miss Stuart, who was mistress of the school-room ;

but as Mrs. Anderson's presence and authority were of the utmost importance for the maintenance of order while Miss Stuart and her colleagues were teaching, she sat at this table whenever she could spare time from the masters and her domestic concerns. Over Mrs. Anderson's chair hung a map of Palestine, which she used in her scriptural reading on Sundays. Beside her, in the corner, stood a terrestrial globe, and between her chair and the fire was a little stool on which she occasionally rested her feet, but which was often occupied by a little girl who could not be made to learn her lessons unless Mrs. Anderson took her in hand.

The space between this window and the middle one was occupied by a set of plain wooden bookshelves reaching from the floor to the height of seven feet. Each shelf was partitioned off into compartments, each one of which belonged to a young lady, who was expected to keep all her lesson books neatly therein. Now we come to the middle window, partially shaded by honeysuckle and vine leaves. This was called "Madame's

window," because her chair stood in front of it ; and before her stretched another table at right angles with those just described. At this table might be seen, during school hours, the first, second, or third class of French, and after lesson time all the greatest talkers in the school assembled there, in conclave. Madame seldom remained at her post except during school hours ; and when she was away, Grace Wilson was generally to be seen, perched in Madame's chair, from which she could command a full view of the door, and was thus *au fait* of all the exits and entrances. There is another set of book shelves between this window and the third, and a low form for little girls stands in front. We now come to Miss Allan's table, standing parallel with Madame d'Almette's. It is the farthest from the fire, but then its window is the prettiest, for, besides the vine and honeysuckle, which peep in on one side, a thick ivy spreads itself half over the other, and an acacia waves its lovely branches in front, so that a golden-green, subdued, and varying light is thrown over the group of young forms seated

at that table; and I often took my seat at the farther end when learning my lessons, that I might look from time to time at the fine picture which Miss Allan made as she sat with her chair against the window, bending her graceful and majestic figure, from side to side, while the waving acacia and the blue sky made a fitting back-ground.

In the corner of the room by Miss Allan (for we have reached to the other extremity) stands an old-fashioned mahogany *what-not*, a receptacle for all the work-boxes of the girls: in the corresponding corner is a corresponding *what-not* for the teachers' desks, boxes, books, &c. Along this end of the room is a range of lockers for the girls to put their playthings in. Beside the teachers' *what-not* is a door opening into another apartment, called "the little room," which was a sort of sanctum for the teachers during play-hours, as at such times only one remained in the school-room at a time. The side of the room from this corner to the door by which we entered displays on the wall two large maps, one of the

ancient, the other of the modern world. In the last, I remember America figured in bright scarlet. Between these two hung a "Stream of Time," before which Ellen Warwick spent many a spare minute, enjoying what some of the girls called *her saturnalia*;—they thought that a classical allusion and a clever pun. Along this side of the room lay a reclining board: there were also two cane-bottomed chairs, and immediately behind the door stood an old canterbury filled with slates.

Having thus travelled round the room, and examined things in detail, let us now give an eye to the general effect. In spite of the uncarpeted floor,—the wooden forms and black tables,—the absence of every elegance,—every luxury,—there is a decidedly pleasant air about the whole room to my eye. Is it because it is play time and the girls look cheerful and are chatting merrily together?—Is it that the sun shines brightly on all the windows at once?—Is it that memory flings a halo round the old school-room, and that "distance lends enchantment to the view?" Certain it is, that to me, the recollection of the by-gone

days spent in that place is pleasant. Perhaps had any one told me then that I should one day feel as I do now, I should have been very sceptical on the matter.

Having conducted you safely to the door again, without even a push from Caroline Webster, you may remain or not, dear reader, as you feel disposed, to see how things went on in our school on a Saturday afternoon.

CHAPTER XIII.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON.

WE had a half-holiday on Saturday. The only thing we were required to do was to mend our clothes. This, with some of us, was no light task; however, it generally happened that those whose wardrobes were in a good condition were willing to assist their less fortunate companions. Thus buttons and tapes were adjusted, and stockings darned, on the co-operative principle. On Saturday afternoon the school was broken up into little *coteries*, each established with its table and set of work-boxes in a different part of the room. Only one teacher remained with us; the others taking advantage of this leisure to retire to the Little Room or to the Drawing-room, or some place where they might be free from the noise of

the school-room. Oh ! what a blessing that must have been ! What a relief to their nerves ! To Miss Stuart it was generally believed to be particularly acceptable. She always retired to her bed-room until the precise moment for her return to duty among us ; when, punctually as the tea-bell rang, did she make her appearance. What she did in her room no one knew. I believed, *then*, that she read and wrote, to prepare more work for the elder girls in the school-room ; especially as Mrs. Anderson was sometimes known to be with her at those times ; for what *could* they consult together about, but our lessons ? The young are so entirely occupied with themselves, and the new thoughts and feelings crowding in upon them every day, that it seems to them quite in the order of Nature that others should be constantly occupied with the subject so all-important to them. I am wiser now, and I fancy Mrs. Anderson and Miss Stuart had matters nearer their hearts than the lessons of their pupils. With them, as with most persons, their daily and hourly occupation was not that which

they loved most to be engaged in. As for Miss Allan, she has since told me that when she first came she was never able to profit by this leisure as she wished; the three short hours fled before she could settle comfortably to any profitable employment; she frittered it away in doing various unnecessary things. She was unused to have her time at her own disposal, and lost half of it in thinking how she should best employ it. In a few months she learnt to manage better, and studied or wrote letters very diligently on Saturday afternoon.

Madame d'Almette spent her half-holiday in going to see her son, and Miss Crawford spent hers in brushing her hair, trying various styles of dressing it, arranging and altering her clothes, and reading "*La Belle Assemblée*." At tea-time Miss Crawford generally looked very pretty, for she was carefully dressed, and "expected a gentleman to see her in the evening." She was always kind and in good humour on Saturday, and the Grey Room was a perfect elysium on that day. We girls blessed that gentleman in

our hearts, for some of us could trace effects to causes. The said gentleman was a good-looking young man, a junior partner in a mercantile house in London ; he is now Miss Crawford's husband. I met her a short time ago at Swan and Edgar's. She was buying a shawl, which was evidently of more importance in her eyes than her old pupil ; indeed, it is very likely that she was ashamed of having been a teacher—she who now drove a handsome carriage, and lived in a fine villa at Streatham. She was very fashionably dressed, and looked very pretty and very uninteresting ; but I recollect papa asked me who was that elegant-looking woman, so I suppose he did not think her uninteresting.

To return to the school-room on a Saturday afternoon. The party of which I was usually a member always took possession of Miss Allan's table, called, by reason of the peculiar light thrown on it in summer, "the Green Table." Our party consisted of Ellen Warwick, Mary Bell, Kate Murray, Laura Harrington, Inez Olivarez, Maria Chester, and Grace Wilson. The

last, on account of her small size, active and light movements, and love of running about, was a sort of Iris to us ; she was accommodated with a stool near the top of the table, but she seldom sat down, springing about from one to the other with the required cotton or needle, tape or button. From time to time was heard the cry of "Come here, Grace ;" "Grace, dear, run and ask Miss — (whoever might be the teacher on duty) if this petticoat will do ," "Grace, darling, run up stairs for my frock ;" "Grace, dear, pick up my thimble." Grace did something for every one, and repaid herself by teasing Laura a little, but not enough to make that damsel energetically angry, which was Grace's object.

We had many a laugh over the old clothes. Ellen hated needlework, especially mending, and so did Maria Chester, and frequently one of them would read aloud while the rest worked ; but our most pleasant times were when it chanced to be Miss Allan's turn to preside in the school-room on Saturday afternoon. She then sat at her own table with us, and always contrived to amuse us

by interesting conversation or stories. She drew us all out ;—even Laura shone, and was known to be occasionally vivacious. As to Ellen, she literally worshipped Miss Allan. It was beautiful to see how she watched every movement of that majestic figure—every turn of that graceful head—and although Miss Allan was careful to conceal her partiality, lest it should make the others jealous, I am certain that she loved Ellen more than any one in the house. They often talked together of the Vaughans, before that family came to town, and a mutual acquaintance generally forms a bond between two persons ; but Miss Allan was scrupulous in her exactions from Ellen, never passing over her errors of omission and commission, so that, as Ellen said, Miss Allan would have been kinder to her if she did not like her so much. One Saturday, Miss Allan reproved Ellen for the untidy state of her wardrobe, and took the opportunity of speaking a few words on the beauty of *order* generally. Ellen would not answer Miss Allan as she would have answered Miss Crawford ; but she was impatient

and annoyed at being scolded for what she considered a trifle, and she expressed some surprise that Miss Allan should attach so much importance to "such insignificant matters."

"Insignificant ! Do you think they signify or indicate nothing, Ellen ?" asked Miss Allan.

"Yes ; I hate them !"

"Indeed ! I wonder you waste so strong a feeling on that which you consider insignificant."

Ellen looked vexed, and was about to make some reply, when Maria Chester asked—

"But do you really think, ma'am, that it will matter much, when we leave school, whether we are tidy or untidy in our clothes ? Of course, while we are at school we must mend and keep our own things in order ; but at home there will be a maid to attend to all that sort of thing. I wonder what papa would say, indeed, if he saw me mending stockings !"

Miss Allan smiled as she replied, "I apprehend that your papa's opinion on that matter would depend upon his position in society, and his fortune. All fathers are not able to give their

daughters a maid to do 'all that sort of thing,' as you call it."

Maria coloured. She feared Miss Allan thought she boasted of her father's wealth and station, which were superior to those of the other girls. To do Maria justice, she was quite above such vulgar pride, and, with the true delicacy of innate good sense and good-nature, would always endeavour to make it out that wealth and station were of no consequence. Her besetting fear was that of being confounded with the Joneses, who were very rich also, and were fond of impressing the fact on the minds of their companions in a thousand little ways. Their father's horses and carriages—their mother's dresses and parties—their *two* houses—were so many offensive weapons with which they attacked all those who were vulnerable on this point. Maria Chester, on the contrary, was so afraid of being thought proud and boastful, that it was long before we found out that her father was the representative of an ancient family, and that she was heiress to his large fortune.

But to return. On the present occasion she said precipitately, and with a look so eager and full of pain and confusion, that I could not help putting my arm round her as she spoke and kissing her warm vermilion cheek, "Oh ! dear Miss Allan ; I did not mean *that*. How ill you must think of me ! To you too, who are obliged to —— ! "

It was now Miss Allan's turn to be eager to re-assure her young friend, and she explained that she did not intend any such reflection upon Maria, whom she believed to be more free from pride than any girl in the school. Maria looked pleased, and some of the rest of us did not know how to look, for we were most of us proud and vain.

Maria went on with the conversation,—“ I have heard papa say that he hates to see a woman stitch, stitch, stitching all day.”

“ So do most persons of cultivated minds,” said Miss Allan ; “ but even *he* would rather see you ‘ stitch, stitch, stitching ’ during a part of the day, than see you with holes in your stockings.”

"Oh, yes! I do not exactly know what sort of person papa wishes me to be. I am not to be a *learned lady*—not to be a *fine lady*—and not to be a machine for managing a house, he says."

"What do you say about managing a house?" cried Grace; "why, you do not suppose you will ever be able to manage a house, do you?"

"And why not, pray, Miss Grace,—eh?"

"Oh!" said Grace, with a loud laugh of derision; "only that I should like to see you managing—that's all."

"Well, I can only promise that when I have a house to manage, you shall come and see me manage it; and that, I suppose, will be when I leave school. Oh! what fun we will have then! There will be no old rags to mend then," said Maria, giving the old petticoat of Mary Bell's, which she was mending, a tremendous fling.

"Do you not think it would be a good thing for us to learn something of housekeeping while we are at school? I am sure we shall all have about as much notion of the matter, as a pig has of French grammar."

"A simile *à la* Grace," cried Ellen; "you learnt that from old nurse Barton, of course."

"Yes, to be sure I did!" said Grace; "a dear old thing! I wish I could see her now!"

"What was that you were saying about lessons in housekeeping, girls?" asked Miss Allan.

Kate Murray explained; and then added, "What fun! Oh, how nice it would be to go down in the kitchen with Mrs. Anderson, and order dinner every day; and give out things from the store-room, and attend to the linen-closet. Oh, I should like that part of my education very much. And then—the puddings and pies I would make! You would like my dinners, girls, I can tell you."

"Why, Kate!" said Laura Harrington; "you surely would not attend to servants' work, like that. *You* make puddings and pies! I never heard of ladies doing such things. The ladies in Jamaica never ——."

"Oh, yes, Laura! we know all about them. They are too lazy to attend to such things,—too lazy to read,—too lazy to write. I wonder they

are not too lazy to live. Don't they have a slave to eat their food for them ? ”

“ What nonsense, Kitty, dear ! But I am sure it is very unladylike to make puddings and pies, and to dirty your hands all over with kitchen things. Is it not, Miss Allan ? ”

Miss Allan was inclined to Kate's view of the matter, qualifying her assent, however, with this remark,—that it was waste of time and misplaced industry for any lady to occupy herself personally with the detail of culinary matters who was able to employ servants for that purpose,—that what in Kate Murray's station, as the eldest daughter of a poor Scotch clergyman, was a duty, was no duty in Laura's position, as the only child of a rich planter, or in Maria Chester.

“ There, you see,” cried Kate ; “ my taste for pastry making was not given me in vain. *I* may make puddings and pies.”

“ Hi ! hi ! hi ! ” interrupted Inez, poking her finger through a great hole in a stocking, and thrusting it before Kate ; “ before you make pudding and pie, you get some new stocking.

This not so nice as apple-pie. Never mind ! I mend him. You copy my music, though, Kate ? ”

“ Yes, yes,” said Kate ; “ but do not waste any time upon that old stocking ; cobble it up any how.”

“ Cobble it up any how ! ” I exclaimed, laughing. “ Good advice, elegantly expressed ! Mr. Lindley Murray, and ‘ The Young Lady’s Friend,’ would approve your style of conversation, Kate ! ”

Laura considered this sally as a reflection upon Kate’s intellectual cultivation, and lazy as she was, Laura would let no one attack Kate without making a defence. For this, she was generally taken to task by Kate afterwards, who would try to convince her that no offence was meant ; but the attempt was mostly in vain. She now began,—

“ You need not be so full of corrections, Miss Granby. I am sure Kate talks as well as you do.”

“ Now, Laura ; can’t you be a little rational, —for once in your life ? ” said Kate.

"Yes, indeed! I suppose Miss Granby is to make fun of you whenever she chooses?"

"Certainly, she is.—Margaret," added Kate, turning with mock gravity to me, "understand that henceforward you have my full consent to make fun of me whenever you choose."

"Provided Laura be not within hearing," said Ellen. "What will be fun to us will be death to her, poor girl."

"Death! what is that about death? Who is dead?" cried Grace, in an agony of curiosity. "Who is dead? Do tell me."

"Hi! hi! hi!" said Inez; "somebody dead, and Grace not know! What you give me if I tell to you who is dead, Miss Quisitive?"

"Oh, anything; only tell me," cried Grace, pressing eagerly forward.

"Come close," said Inez, pulling her by the ear, into which she whispered, "Adam and Eve, both dead! buried last Monday!"

Grace laughed, and pulled Inez's ear in return. At this crisis, Miss Allan said, "Who will like to listen while I tell a story?"

“Oh, I, I, I,” we all cried at once. “Is it true?”—“Quite true.”—“Oh, a quite true story! Charming!” said Ellen; “let us all be quiet, and then Miss Allan will begin.”

CHAPTER XIV.



MISS ALLAN'S STORY.

ONCE upon a time,—how long ago, I cannot say,—(but it was before omnibuses and railroads had made their appearance in the world,)—a heavy coach, licensed to carry six inside passengers, used to travel leisurely from London to Croydon, in Surrey. One fine summer morning this said coach was standing before an inn in Gracechurch Street, ready to start. The coachman was already seated on the box, and the guard was looking eagerly, first on one side of the street and then on the other, as if expecting a tardy passenger. “Here he comes at last, Bill!” cried he to the coachman; and then he opened the coach-door with alacrity, saying, “Here you are, sir! Time’s up, sir!” and a little old gentleman

came up to the vehicle, rather out of breath, but not at all out of temper.

"I am sorry to have kept you waiting, my friend. Have you reserved the whole of one side of the coach for me?"

"Yes, sir; there's three places for you."

"Very good; then lend a hand to help in my poor dog." At this moment a man wheeled to the spot a barrow, on which lay a fine Newfoundland dog, who was to all appearance very ill, being unable to stand. The guard assisted the man to remove the poor dog into the coach, where two seats had been engaged for him by his kind master, who superintended his removal with the liveliest interest, and settled his dumb favourite with the greatest care, upon some cushions he had provided for him. The poor animal looked up in his master's face with that speechless eloquence peculiar to his race, and made feeble efforts to return his master's caresses.

"Poor Carlo! poor old fellow! Soon be well again, Carlo," said the old gentleman, patting him gently, and the coach began to move. As he

bent down, a little hand,—the hand of a child,—came stealing over the curly black coat of Carlo. The old gentleman looked up, and saw a little girl of about seven years of age, who was leaning forward from the opposite seat to stroke the dog. This little girl was healthy and intelligent looking; she was neatly dressed in mourning. Next to her sat a little boy, also in mourning; he was of sickly appearance, but his face was so like that of the little girl, that it was clear he was her brother. A lady was seated beside them, in the corner farthest from the old gentleman. Her countenance was sorrowful, but pleasing to look on; she wore widow's weeds, and from the resemblance borne by both the children to her, it was evident that she was their mother. This little old gentleman was a kind-hearted, benevolent bachelor, and, like many such persons, was very fond of children. He liked them even better than he liked dogs, and that is saying much. He began a conversation with this little girl by asking her if she were fond of dogs, and when she replied "yes," in a sweet, cheerful little voice, he told

her about Carlo's illness,—how he had been poisoned accidentally. Then the little girl asked a great many questions about Carlo ; and when she had done asking questions, the old gentleman, who began to like her very much, asked what was her name. She replied, " Mary Stuart."

" And what is your little brother's name ? "

" His name is Charles Stuart, but we call him Charlie."

At this reply, the gentleman smiled at first, and then he looked at the children again, and shook his head. After this, he examined the mother more attentively than he had yet done, and, raising his hat with the grave and graceful courtesy of the old school of politeness, he said, with a smile, " Your children have distinguished but unfortunate names, Madam."

The lady glanced at the children with a mother's affection in her eye, and then said, that " their names were not the only unfortunate circumstances connected with them." After this, nothing was more natural than that the lady and the old gentleman should begin a conversation,

from which conversation it appeared that the gentleman's name was Russell,—that he lived in a large house near Croydon,—that he had resided there many years,—that the house was his own,—and that he intended to reside there during the remainder of his life. It appeared also that the cottage which Mrs. Stuart had recently taken at Croydon was near Mr. Russell's house. That gentleman saw much that interested him in this little family. Mrs. Stuart was a gentlewoman, that was clear ;—and the children, especially little Mary, pleased him much. He thought he had never seen a child more in accordance with his notion of what a child ought to be ; and little Mary felt quite sure she had never seen so nice an old gentleman.

When the coach reached Croydon, and stopped at Mr. Russell's house, he bade his new acquaintances farewell ; both parties were sorry at the separation. Mary held up her little face to be kissed, and caressed Carlo for the last time ; and when he and his master disappeared within the gates of Russell Lodge, she exclaimed to her

mother, "I hope I shall see that gentleman again."

The very next day, as Mrs. Stuart was sitting alone in her little parlour, Mary ran into the room, with a card in her hand, which she gave to her mamma, saying, "Oh! mamma! the kind gentleman with the great dog has come, and he told me to bring you that." It was Mr. Russell's card.

"Ask him to come to me, Mary," said Mrs. Stuart. Mary ran off in great joy, and soon returned with the old gentleman, who advanced with a mixture of respect and kindness in his manner. He spoke frankly, and said that he felt a great desire to cultivate the acquaintance of his new neighbour, and had therefore taken the liberty of calling on her immediately. He then proceeded to talk of general matters, in so pleasant and sensible a manner, that Mrs. Stuart enjoyed his visit, and felt so much at ease with him, that before it ended, she informed him of several circumstances concerning herself,—that her husband had been dead six months,—that he had been

a lieutenant in the army. She did not tell him that the white velvet, on which she was painting such beautiful flowers, while she conversed, was intended for sale,—or that she was in the habit of doing such things to add a little to her scanty income.

During the time Mr. Russell staid, Mary stood by him listening to all that he said, and thinking what a very nice old gentleman he was. After he was gone, she talked very much about him, and wished that “her hair was white, like Mr. Russell’s,—it was so pretty.”

Mr. Russell became a frequent visitor at Mrs. Stuart’s cottage, and often returned home accompanied by little Mary. As he never went anywhere else, the world (about Croydon) judged that “old Mr. Russell was going to marry that widow at the cottage;” but the world was never more mistaken in its life; for they did not marry, and, what is more, they had never thought of marrying. The fact is, that it was on little Mary Stuart Mr. Russell had set his affection, and not on her mother. She had an irresistible charm for him.

She was not a pretty child, nor was she in any way an intellectual prodigy. (Mr. Russell hated children who were intellectual prodigies.) She was lively, sensible, and affectionate, besides being tolerably quick witted, and, what is wonderful to add, she was neither vain nor pert, as clever children generally are, thereby being very much disliked by all persons except their parents, and, perhaps, those who teach them,—to whom custom gives the nuisance “a property of easiness,” and who have opportunities of noting those better qualities which are, in time, to destroy those besetting sins of early youth.. Whenever Mary was spoken to by her elders, she always answered with a tone and a look of respect, because there was a natural feeling of respect for other persons within her childish mind. This was innate,—not the result of precept or example. She did not know how to be insolent; she was born, I suppose, with what the phrenologists call, a large organ of veneration. Few young persons are aware how much respect adds to grace of manner, or how much the smallest approach to

insolence or disrespect detracts from it. This reverence, in a little child, pleased and surprised Mr. Russell;—he had studied human nature deeply,—he knew how rare a thing it is to see a *man* at once fearless and reverential,—clever and unpresuming. In a child, he had never seen the union before; and he felt sure that this peculiarity was the indication of a character which was to rise above the common. He became very fond of her, and contrived to have her very much at his house, on various pretexts;—now to look at picture books in his library,—now to help him in his green-house,—at one time to take a lesson in arithmetic,—and at another to play with Carlo. This was perfectly delightful to the little girl. She was very fond of Mr. Russell and of Carlo,—of the picture-books and of the garden;—of the arithmetic she was not so fond. Her only regret, while running about Mr. Russell's house and grounds was, that mamma and Charlie could not be there too; but mamma was too busy, and Charlie too poorly.

A circumstance occurred about a year after

their first acquaintance which cemented this affection between Mr. Russell and Mary. There was a small but deep basin of water on one side of the lawn, at Russell Lodge. Mr. Russell stood at his bed-room window one day, watching little Mary at play. She was running round the pond very fast, and he was about to throw up the window, and tell her not to do so, when suddenly she stopped, and, staggering from giddiness, fell into the water. Terror seemed to have tongue-tied the old man; he did not call for assistance, or there would have been no danger, as several men servants were about the premises. Instead of doing this, he ran out of the house himself, across the lawn, to the pond. He saw the child's body rising to the surface of the water, and, plunging in after her, he was just able to drag himself and his burden to the edge of the pond, when he became insensible. A short time after this, Carlo's barking brought a gardener to the spot, who was not a little astonished to find his "master and little Miss" lying half drowned beside the pond.

From that time, Mr. Russell's attachment to Mary became much stronger, and Mary, on her side, seemed to have more than a child's affection for the old man.

Having now, as it were, a sort of right to love and care for Mary, he prevailed on her mother to allow him to take the superintendence and expense of Mary's education upon himself, promising to secure to her a small income at his death. With true benevolence, he did not seek to remove her from her mother's house;—all that he required was, that she should spend several hours every day in his,—and that when she grew older, her studies should be pursued under his care.

The company of this child was to him like the renewal of his youth. He paid the greatest attention to her mental cultivation as she became older. He had what were then thought, very odd notions concerning the education of women,—and Mary was to become a specimen of his ideal woman. There was to be nothing merely showy or superficial about her; all was to be

sound and solid. If she showed any taste for music or drawing, it was not to be taught her as light accomplishments; but as a high art. She was not to do this or that because other young ladies did it. Mr. Russell thought he saw in Mary symptoms of an earnestness of will, a depth of passion, and a keen nervous sensibility, which would either make, or mar, her happiness. He was anxious to strengthen and enlarge her mind, so as to enable her to stand steadily all the trials, and withstand boldly all the temptations, to which persons of her unexpressive poetic temperament are exposed.

Here Miss Allan stopt for a moment, as if to check herself in a train of thought which would not easily be understood by her auditors; but Ellen looked so much as if she understood, and some others looked so much as if they would like to understand, that Miss Allan went on; for she was one of those who think it well to try to raise the minds of the young to a comprehension of the thoughts of their instructors, rather than that the instructor should try to lower his thoughts to the

comprehension of the young mind. Yet Miss Allan, when talking with grown persons, never "talked over their heads," designedly.

She went on thus :—The general systems of female education he considered quite unfit for his pupil. They tended, he thought, to weaken the minds of women, by exciting vanity and nervous sensitiveness to a morbid degree. By a gentle, steady discipline, unremitting and uncompromising, he hoped, to give Mary a firm, energetic character, and a power of endurance and of perseverance. In childhood, he believed it of the first importance to preserve her from injudicious admiration,—injudicious praise and injudicious blame, which are so corrupting in their effects, producing unwarrantable self-satisfaction, indolence, injurious excitement, and ill-temper. Here he met with opposition from Mrs. Stuart, although she would have been very much astonished had any one told her so, for she firmly believed she co-operated with Mr. Russell ; and she was certainly a woman of more than average sense and education. It never entered into her head that,

in questioning Mary about her lessons, or occupations, or opinions, when a visitor happened to be present, she was doing her child a moral injury. Poor Mr. Russell would have shrugged his shoulders in despair had he overheard such a conversation as the following, which took place one day after Mary had been inattentive and careless at her lessons, and on her return home found a lady with her mamma.

"Well, Mary, dear, what have you been doing to-day?" asked Mrs. Stuart, just to give her visitor an opportunity of knowing Mary's general occupations.

"Oh! geography and algebra, mamma."

"Why, my dear Mrs. Stuart," cries the visitor, with uplifted hands; "you do not mean to say that Mary learns algebra?"

"Oh yes, she does! Mary, dear, show Mrs. Denham what you have been doing to-day."

Mary was only twelve years old; she opened her book with a blush and a smile, which, as it made her look pretty, was naturally mistaken by the two ladies for modesty and a pleasure in

pleasing. How harsh they would have thought Mr. Russell! for he would have seen in both the excitement of *vanity*—the demon from which he laboured to preserve his darling.

The ladies, of course, looked on the book with the wonder of ignorance. "Well, I should never be able to understand that!" said Mrs. Stuart. What could Mary infer from that, young as she was? Simply that she was very clever, and could do what her own mother could not. "How odd and difficult it looks!" said Mrs. Denham. The mother, naturally anxious to see her daughter's proficiency, and to make her friend see it, said, "Let us know what all this means, Mary. Let us see if you know."

How they were to ascertain what Mary knew, or did not know, on the subject, it is difficult to say. The little girl explained away with animation; the demoralising desire to show off was awakened, and she astonished the two ladies by her "wonderful cleverness," as Mrs. Denham called it. Mrs. Stuart was afraid to praise as much as she believed such surpassing merit

deserved, lest her child should become vain ; but she smiled, and looked significantly at Mrs. Denham, who did not feel compelled to restrain her admiration, but declared that "the young lady quite beats her boys, who have been at school three years." She strokes Mary's hair, and wonders how "such a little head can contain all that knowledge." Why does not little Mary say at once that what she has just been telling them was acquired half an hour ago, and that instead of deserving praise, she had been unusually idle and careless over her lessons that morning ? At the time, she felt too vain to be able to declare the truth ; but at night, after she was in bed, and reflected on the events of the day, she felt sure there was something wrong in the matter, and she determined to tell Mr. Russell the next day. She did so. The old man seemed much concerned ; he saw at once there was no remedy for this evil. To caution Mary against folly or weakness in her own mother, or in persons who were entitled to her respect from their superior age, would be to destroy Mary's finest characteristic. He saw that

it was impossible to keep his pupil from evil influences, and that even in the best system of education much must be left to chance. He spoke kindly to her on the subject, and made her feel that no praise ought to please us which we do not feel to be deserved.

Years passed on ; Mary had just attained her sixteenth year, and Charlie, now about fourteen, had been placed at the neighbouring college of Addiscombe by Mr. Russell, who had interest in India, and had promised Mrs. Stuart to put her boy in a fair way of rising in the Company's service. About this time Mrs. Stuart died, after a short illness. On her death-bed, she earnestly entreated Mr. Russell to continue his care for her children, who had now no friend in the world but himself. She thanked him fervently for what he had done for them, and trusted implicitly in the good old man's promise to do for them all she could wish.

He received the orphans into his house, and he behaved to them as he had ever done. But he was seventy-two years of age, and it could not

be expected that he had much longer to live. He waited the return of his nephew, Sir John Russell, who had held the office of a judge in Calcutta, for several years, and who was coming to England with his family. This nephew was a great favourite with the old man, and he intended to leave him the bulk of his property, after providing for Mary and Charles Stuart.

About a year after Mrs. Stuart's death the return of Sir John Russell and family was announced in the morning papers. Mary read it to Mr. Russell at breakfast ; he was much pleased, and declared that Charles should be sent for, and they would all drive up to London and bring the whole family down to Croydon directly. Mary went immediately to consult with the housekeeper about bed-room and nursery accommodations for Lady Russell and the children ; and then, with a pleasant feeling of anticipation, she dressed herself to go to town with her dear father, as she called him. She wished to see his relations ; she was prepared to love them ; and as to the children, she longed to have them to amuse. She

dressed herself in a white muslin frock and pelerine, and, taking her straw bonnet in her hand, ran down stairs to ask her "father" whether he thought she ought to put on the Indian shawl he gave her last week. When she entered Mr. Russell's study, she was surprised to find him in the very act of embracing a young man whom she had never seen before. She was about to leave the room again, when Mr. Russell caught sight of her, and said, "Come in, my dear; come in. — Guess who this is, Mary," added he, leading the young man towards her.

"I know now," said Mary, with a bright cordial smile, as she looked at the stranger; "it is your nephew, Sir John Russell;" and she stretched out her hand with that quiet simplicity which was natural to her. The stranger took her hand, but laughed a little. Mr. Russell laughed a good deal, and wondered whether Mary would ever be able to guess people's ages by their looks. He then explained that "this gentleman was about twenty years of age, and was the eldest son of his nephew, Sir John Russell." Mary

did not blush or look in the slightest degree ashamed of her mistake ; she merely begged Mr. John Russell's pardon, and said she never could tell ages.

In a short time, Charles made his appearance, and it was decided that they should all go to town together. Mr. John Russell soon became much pleased with Mary and her brother ; and by the time they reached the hotel where his parents were, he had quite come to the conclusion that they had been mistaken in supposing this young girl to be artful or to have designs on her benefactor's property ; but he did not succeed in bringing Sir John and Lady Russell to this opinion.

Mr. Russell was quite delighted to have his house filled with his nephew's family, and he was glad to see that Lady Russell seemed to like Mary. Mary, on her side, liked every body,—but she liked John and the children the most ; for it was clear to her, that John and the children liked her more than Sir John, Lady, or Miss Russell (a girl about her own age) did. Mary was now fully employed, for she continued her studies

with Mr. Russell, as before, and devoted the rest of her time to teaching and amusing the children, or in walks, rides, or conversation with the grown-up members of the family. Things went on in this way for about three months, when Mr. Russell was taken ill, and became anxious to make his will. He wrote to his solicitor to come to him immediately; that is, Mary sat by his bedside and wrote what he dictated. The letter was sent off, but it was too late. Before the solicitor arrived, the good old man breathed his last in the arms of poor Mary, who paid little attention to the solemn promises which Sir John made to his uncle about taking care of Mary and Charles as if they were his own children. She had never thought of her own dependent state. How should she think of it? She had never been made to feel it.

It was not long after the death of her dear benefactor, that poor Mary was made to understand the value of money and position in the world. One day, after she had subdued her grief by prayer, in her own room, she left it with a

determination to follow out her "father's" precepts by bearing patiently and firmly even *this* loss. She set about resuming her old office of instructress to the children, and she was forcing herself to teach little Susan to read. It was a hard task, for the child was dull, and the teacher sick at heart. She uttered a heavy sigh, as once more she repeated the letter which Susan did not remember. She was pointing on the book, and bending over it, when a hand gently drew it away. She looked up, and saw young Mr. Russell standing beside her.

"Mary, dearest, you must not give yourself this trouble just now; indeed you are not strong enough. Let Susan go and play, and come with me into the shrubbery. A little air will do you good. I have seen so little of you since ——" He stopped, for Mary's eyes filled with tears. She wiped them hastily, for she knew it pained John to see her unhappy; so she sent Susan to play, and went to walk in the garden with John. They walked there about an hour, and Mary felt her sorrow give way before the affectionate solicitude

of her companion. They had been lovers some time. On the morning of old Mr. Russell's death, Mary had promised to become John Russell's wife. Poor simple girl! She loved John, and John loved her; she never dreamed that there could be any obstacle to their union. After avowing her love candidly to her lover, she proceeded directly to her benefactor's room, to inform him of what had happened, quite confident that the communication would delight him. When she saw him, he was too ill to attend to anything, and when he revived a little, he desired her to write the letter already mentioned to his solicitor. After this, her dear father's rapid decline took from her all thought except for him. It was now three weeks since his death, and she had not been alone with John since he had offered her his hand.

The young man knew more of the world, and its ideas of the fit and the becoming, than Mary. He was uneasy about the prospect of their union. He knew, and so did Mary, that his uncle had deferred making a will until too late. But Mary

did not know that this materially affected their prospects. Had Mr. Russell known their mutual love, and made a will before his death, John felt sure that his father and mother would not have objected to his marriage with Mary, because Mr. Russell would have provided for them both amply. As it was, Sir John was heir to Mr. Russell's large fortune, Mary had not a penny, and he himself depended entirely on his father. If, as he feared, his parents would not consent to the marriage, what could they do? He represented this difficulty to Mary as delicately as possible. She said, "We must tell Sir John and Lady Russell directly; surely they cannot be so unreasonable as to refuse their consent to a marriage which would make you happy."

"But they wish me to marry somebody else."

"But of course you cannot, if you love me, as you say!"

"As I say, Mary! You speak as if you did not believe me."

"I believe you; there can be no doubt between us, dear John."

“Heaven bless you, my own Mary! I will go now and speak to my father. Good bye, Mary. I will be back very soon; wait here till I come; and read this letter, which I wrote to you yesterday.” So saying, the young man left her seated on a bench in the shrubbery—and he never saw her again.

“Oh! oh!” resounded from us all at these words. We waited with eager looks for the continuation of this tale, when the tea-bell was heard. This time Laura Harrington was more abusive of the bell than ever. But it was as inevitable as a law of nature. We could hear no more of the story then; we were obliged to go to the eating-room directly; and we knew that we could not hear the end until that day month, when Miss Allan would preside in the school-room again.

CHAPTER XV.

AN UNCOMMON EVENT.

WE heard the conclusion of Miss Allan's tale sooner than we expected, for she sat in the school-room on the following Saturday afternoon, although it was not her turn. I may as well relate the occasion of this. In the middle of school-time on Friday morning Miss Stuart received a letter. Her table happened to be clear of pupils at the time. She was waiting for a class, and had kindly taken that moment to explain some astronomical mystery to me, about which I had shown myself more than ordinarily stupid. She went on with her explanation as she took the letter from the servant, and, without looking at it, put it down on the table beside her. When she had finished, and I had declared that *now* I

understood perfectly, she suffered her eye to fall on the address of her letter. I have seldom,—nay, never,—seen so great a change in a human face as now took place in that of Miss Stuart. A crimson flush came over it,—her eye dilated and became fixed on the writing, while her mouth remained half open in breathless astonishment. At length I heard her murmur the words, “Good God!” in so fervent an accent, that the hum and buzz of the busy school-room sounded to me as if it were far off. She stretched out her hand to take up the letter; but it fell from it. I picked it up and gave it to her; she retained it in her hand without opening it, and kept her eye fixed with an eager painful gaze on the hand-writing. At this moment, Jane Worthington came up and spoke thus, in her usual drawling tone,—“If you please, ma’am, was it the Romans or Hannibal who gained the battle of Marengo?” At any other time I should have laughed, but now I could not help watching Miss Stuart with anxiety, for I feared that the sight of the letter had made her very ill or very unhappy. She raised her eyes to

the speaker's face, and stared rather wildly. Jane was, of course, too stupid to perceive that anything was the matter, and repeated her question. Miss Stuart seemed to recollect herself a little ;—she rose from her chair, pushed Jane back from her, very gently, saying, “ Yes, I remember,—another time, my dear,” and, turning away, she walked with unsteady steps out of the room, still holding the letter in her hand and keeping her eyes fixed on it. I must confess, my girlish curiosity was highly excited. What could there be in a letter that could thus move the calm, clock-work-like head teacher ? I went to Ellen and Mary Bell directly, and contrived to communicate this little matter to them, under cover of showing them how to knit,—a mystery in which I had undertaken to initiate them both. It was school-time, and we expected every moment to be forbidden to speak ; therefore our words were few and whispered.

“ Did it look like a foreign letter ? ” asked Ellen.—“ I did not observe.”—“ Perhaps it was from her brother,” said Mary.—“ Or,”—and

Ellen's voice became very low, as she said,—
“perhaps her brother may be dead.”—We
neither of us said any more, and in a few
minutes I was obliged to go to a class with
Madame d'Almette. More than half an hour
passed, and still Miss Stuart did not return.
Every one wanted her, and by this unwonted
absence we found how necessary she was to us.
At last, Ellen, who was very fond of Miss Stuart,
became seriously alarmed, and asked Madame if
she might go and see whether Miss Stuart was ill.

“*Mais—oui, ma chère ;—il faut qu'il y ait
quelque-chose de bien extraordinaire ! Il y a
trois quarts d'heure qu'elle n'y est pas. Elle
doit être malade,—pauvre chère ! Mais que
veux-tu ? Ce n'est pas étonnant ! Elle se
fatigue tant ! Vas, mon enfant ; vas, tout de
suite ! et dis lui que j'irai à sa chambre le
moment que la classe soit finie.*” Ellen went ;—
she remained absent a short time, and when she
returned, Mrs. Anderson was with her. That
lady took Miss Stuart's place, and the school
became hushed and industrious again. When

the dressing bell rang, Mrs. Anderson announced that Miss Stuart was not very well that day, and would not be able to teach, in the afternoon, and that therefore those lessons, which otherwise should be done then, were excused.

Mrs. Anderson had no sooner retired than the loud buzz of school-girl curiosity began.

"What is the matter with Miss Stuart?"—"Do you know?"—"Do you know?"—"Who knows?"—"A head-ache?"—"It can't be that."—"No, she never leaves the school-room for a head-ache."—"A letter!"—"Who from?"—"How should I know?"—"Who was with her when she got it?"—"Jane Worthington."—"Jane! Jane!—Jane Worthington!—what was the matter with Miss Stuart when she went out of the room?"—"Why, she was very cross, that's all I know, for she pushed me away from her just so. I don't like to be pushed about," continued that sapient young lady, shaking her shoulders sulkily; "I wasn't sent here to be pushed about by her."—"Nonsense, Jane; how silly you are!"—"Not a bit more silly than yourself, Miss Chester;

and I won't be called silly either, by any one."—
"Then nobody can ever talk about you, Jane,"
retorted the flippant Maria. "No, they had
better not!" said Jane doggedly. Several girls
laughed. Grace's voice was then heard: "Oh!
I saw her colour all over when she looked at the
letter."—"Had it a black seal?"—"I do not
know."—"Yes it had."—"No, it had not."—
"What sort of a hand was it? Did any one
see?"—"It was a gentleman's hand," said Susanna
Jones.—"How do you know?"—"Because I
looked at it, as it was lying on the hall table."
—"Perhaps it is from a lover," added Susan,
with a giggle.—"How absurd you are, Sue!"
said her younger sister; "just as if an ugly old
thing like Miss Stuart could ever have a lover!"
—"I'll just tell her what you say, Miss Sarah
Jones," cried Grace indignantly, "if you dare to
speak in that rude way of Miss Stuart. You're
not so very beautiful yourself that you should call
any one ugly."—"Don't be rude, Grace, dear!"
whispered Mary Bell.—"Well, she should not
speak of Miss Stuart so!" said Grace, her eyes

still flashing. "I dare say it is from her brother in India."—"Well, I think it is to say that he is dead!"—"Perhaps after all it is nothing to do with the letter."—"It may be the noise of the school-room that has made her head ache."—"At all events we shall get off that horrid grammar lesson this afternoon."—"And I shall not do no sum. Hi! hi! hi!" quoth Inez.—"Yes, much you all care for poor Miss Stuart!" said Laura. "She may be dying for what you care! And there goes that bell, just as loud as ever; I'm sure that's enough to make any one ill."—"The bell!—the dinner bell!" cried a dozen voices, "and we are none of us dressed for dinner!"—"What shall we do?"—"We must go down as we are," said Kate Murray, "and trust to Providence and Miss Stuart's illness that Mrs. Anderson will not notice our morning costume."—"Costume! What a fine word, Kate!" said Caroline Webster.—"Well, and a very good word, too," began Laura, for she thought Kate's language was attacked. "Oh Laura! never mind that—put up that piece of hair—and come down

directly," said Kate, who was half way down stairs, while Laura lingered at the school-room door to reprove Caroline, who, poor girl ! had caught her frock in the handle of the same, and torn out half the gathers.

We saw no more of Miss Stuart that day, nor had Ellen any opportunity of telling me what occurred when she went to Miss Stuart's room in the morning, until we went to our bed-rooms, at night. While Mary, Ellen, and I, were undressing, Ellen spoke as follows :—" When I got to the door of Miss Stuart's room, I felt almost afraid to knock. At last I did knock gently, but as she did not answer, I opened the door. There I saw Miss Stuart seated at her little table, with her head bowed down on her hands, which were folded over an open letter. She was motionless. Mrs. Anderson was standing beside her with a face of great interest. Of course, neither of them heard me open the door ; and I stood still, afraid to go in, and yet anxious to know whether dear Miss Stuart was very ill or not. I could not speak, for there was something in her attitude

that struck me dumb. Mrs. Anderson touched her arm and said, 'What is this? Is it bad news? Tell me, dear Miss Stuart!' She raised her head. Her eyes were streaming with tears, but I am quite sure they were tears of happiness. What an expressive face hers is! Well, she took Mrs. Anderson's hand, and said: 'No bad news! Only so good that I cannot believe it to be true. Read that,' said she, giving the letter into her hand. The letter seemed very short, for Mrs. Anderson read it through in a minute. She smiled and stooped down to kiss Miss Stuart, and said, 'Thank God!' in a heartfelt tone; 'I wish you joy.'—'Is it not too late?' asked Miss Stuart. 'Too late! Never too late to become happy; sooner or later, joy comes after misery, and rest after toil. Do not think of going into the school-room any more to-day. You are too much agitated; and when you are recovered enough to write a line to him, say 'Yes, come to-morrow.' Miss Stuart bent her head down again, and Mrs. Anderson came to the door, where she saw me standing. She did not speak until she had closed

the door, when she said, 'You look alarmed, Ellen; Miss Stuart is quite well, dear; she is overcome by some unexpected good news, which you shall all know before long.' And that is all that I have to tell," concluded Ellen. "Well, I am delighted to hear it is good news," said I. "What can it be? Is she going to be married?" And we speculated on the subject until we fell asleep.

The next day was Saturday. We all three, indeed all the girls, watched Miss Stuart as she came into the school-room. "She does not look as if she had been ill!" whispered one. "No, she looks much better than usual," said another. At breakfast, I noticed that she ate nothing, and that Mrs. Anderson laughingly told her she would "never get through the business of the day if she starved herself." After breakfast, as we were getting our books to join a class, Ellen and I found an opportunity of assuring each other that "it must be that Miss Stuart was going to be married." To our astonishment, she behaved just as usual;—her manner was even calmer and

more collected than ordinary; but I fancied she was gentler and kinder, and she certainly looked brighter. At dinner, Miss Stuart did not make her appearance. Mrs. Anderson said she was going out. About half an hour after dinner, as Ellen and I were in the Grey Room, alone, we fancied we heard the sound of wheels. It was too great a temptation;—we jumped up on chairs, and watched a beautiful carriage drive up the avenue. “That is some one for Miss Stuart, I am sure!” said Ellen. I thought the carriage too handsome to contain the friends of a school-teacher. “We shall see,” said Ellen. “I wish we *could* see!” quoth I, vainly striving to see who was getting out; for it had reached the house. Consoling ourselves with the reflection that Mrs. Anderson had said we should know all, in time, we left the window, and went to get our linen to mend. A sudden thought struck Ellen,—“If Miss Stuart goes out this afternoon, some one else must sit in the school-room. I’ll go and ask Miss Allan, and then we shall hear the end of that story. I want to know what

becomes of that poor girl."—"Well, I care more just now about what is going on in the drawing-room between Miss Stuart and her visitors."—"Why, Margaret, you are as bad as Grace Wilson."

"Ah! listeners never hear any good of themselves; that's a sure thing," said Grace, coming into our bed-room, where we were turning over linen from the wash.

"But I was not listening, though the door was open, and I could not help hearing."

"I know, dear, you would not listen," said Ellen kindly; "but what did you come for?"

"To tell you both that our green-table party is all assembled. Miss Allan is in the school-room, and is only waiting for you to go on with her story."

"Oh, run down, and say we will come directly."

"Yes. Can I do anything for you?"

"Yes, dear; get our work-boxes ready for us."

"Oh! I did that half-an-hour ago. Anything else? Let me take down those stockings."

"Thank you, dear; only go and tell Miss Allan we are coming."

We followed in a few minutes. On the stairs we met Hannah, the upper housemaid, who was a favourite with us. She looked very pleased at something, and we asked what made her look so happy. "Oh! I can't help being pleased, though, to be sure, it don't concern me. Only this I will say, if there was ever a lady as deserved to be happy, I do think it is Miss Stuart."

"Oh! what about Miss Stuart?"

"Lor! don't you know, young ladies? Why, there's a fine handsome middle-aged gentleman, with a sweet-looking young lady, come to see her; and it isn't her brother; and I couldn't help seeing by his manner, and hers, that they loved each other very much, though, may-be, they are a little old for lovers. However, mark my words, young ladies, there'll be a wedding here before long. The young lady is now in the drawing-room with Mrs. Anderson, and Miss Stuart has gone out with the strange gentleman, in his carriage. He is such a grand officer-like

gentleman! Well to be sure! it *will* be a change for Miss Stuart!"

We ran down stairs delighted with Hannah's information, and as my mind was at ease on the subject of Miss Stuart, I was now ready to hear what you will find in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE END OF MISS ALLAN'S STORY.

"Who remembers where I left off?" asked Miss Allan.

"You left off just where young Mr. Russell went into the house to speak to his father, and left poor Mary seated in the garden," said Maria.

"Yes, and he gave her a letter to read while he was gone," said Mary.

"And you said that he never saw her again," said Ellen.

"Did I?" said Miss Allan, smiling.

"Yes, yes; you said so; but did they see each other again?" cried little Grace.

"Stop a moment; before we begin, let us see that every one is here, and that we have all we want. Where are your scissors, Laura?"

"I let them fall just now. There they are ; run and pick them up for her, Grace, dear," said Kate.

At this precise moment, Susanna Jones, Caroline Webster, and Jane Worthington, begged permission to join our table. They complained that they had all the little ones at their end of the room, and that Sophia was reading aloud a story which they had heard a dozen times before. They knew Miss Allan was telling a nice story ;—they had heard the first part of it from Grace Wilson, and they would very much like to hear the rest, if we would make room for them at our table. Miss Allan said she should be very glad of their company if they would bring their work and join us. At this, I heard sundry murmurs among our party,—“No room for more ;” “Spoil our nice cosy set ;” “How tiresome !” &c. But Mary Bell and Maria Chester made decided movements to admit the new comers, and Ellen said, “Hush !” as plainly as possible, by look and gesture. In a few minutes, the intruders were accommodated amongst us,—without any accident

but a great rent in Caroline's work, as she clambered clumsily over the form. The work happened to be a petticoat belonging to Inez, whose eyes flashed fire on the occasion; but she only said, "Ugh! you great awkward thing! Lucky, that not my best petticoat." Miss Allan having cautioned Inez against the use of violent expressions to her companions, and said a kind word to the poor blushing Caroline, recommenced her story as follows:—

As soon as Mary was alone she began to read the letter which John Russell had given her; it was merely a repetition of his former declaration of attachment to her, with a representation of his fears as to his parents' consent. She had just finished it, and was folding it up, when she saw Lady Russell standing before her. "Give me that letter, Mary," she said. There was something in the look and tone with which this was said that startled Mary. She had not been accustomed to the tone of command, and, instead of obeying, as she would have done had Lady Russell spoken kindly, she deliberately put the

letter into her bosom, and said, "I would rather not show it to your ladyship, now."

"Tell me who it is from?"

"It is from John."

"And what can *my son, Mr. John Russell*, have to write to you?" said Lady Russell, in a haughty, reproofing manner.

Mary was of so trustful a nature, that she was unable to account for this strange behaviour in one who had hitherto treated her with scrupulous politeness, and began to think that it must be all her own fancy; she, therefore, rose from her seat, and said, "If your ladyship would like a walk through the shrubbery, I shall have time to tell you before he comes back."

"He! who comes back?"

"Your son, John. He has just gone to ask his father's consent to—to—to our betrothal." Poor Mary had learned nearly all she knew of love matters from books, in which ladies and gentlemen are said to be *betrothed*, and not *engaged*.

"*Our betrothal!*" said Lady Russell, with a

sneer. "I am surprised, Mary, that you should have ensnared a young man, of Mr. John Russell's position in the world, into a proposal of marriage. I had a higher opinion of your principles, from the care that has been taken with your education."

Mary stared aghast, as if puzzled. "Ensnared! But, no, you cannot mean *that*. You mean that it is strange John should have fallen in love with me, because I am not beautiful. I think so, too; but he does love me. I am very fortunate, and hope some day to be worthy to be his wife."

Lady Russell stopped short in her walk, and looking Mary in the face, said, "This is either the most unblushing impudence or the most lamentable ignorance. Surely you must be aware that neither Sir John nor I can ever sanction our eldest son's alliance with *you*. Excuse me, Mary Stuart, but I must remind you that you are a penniless dependent, adopted out of charity by the late Mr. Russell—there, don't give way to tears; we shall not turn you off. Sir John has too much respect for his uncle's memory not to carry out all his wishes, even those which all the

world might think preposterous and absurd. You must remember that although you have lived in this house as its mistress, you had no more right to be here than to be queen of Tartary. It was a mere caprice of an old man in his dotage."

Here she was interrupted by Mary. "He was not in his dotage. He loved me, and I loved him, and what better right could I have to live with him? Do not say a word against my father, madam."

"Your father! nonsense, child. You wheedled and flattered him, so that the silly old man was quite infatuated. I verily believe that if Sir John had not returned when he did, you would have succeeded in your design of persuading him to leave all his property to you and your brother. Ah! you may start and stare!—your vile arts have been detected, you see."

"Lady Russell, is this your real opinion?" asked Mary, controlling her emotion at this cruel and unmerited attack.

"Certainly it is; I do not believe you were attached to Mr. Russell from any but interested

motives. Indeed, I must confess that you show a remarkable prudence and worldliness for your age. You have made the most of the time since Mr. Russell's death. As soon as you found that a will in your favour had not been made, you immediately sought to procure yourself an establishment by entrapping my son, a mere boy, into a promise of marriage. You must know perfectly that such a marriage would disgrace his family and ruin himself."

"Stop, Lady Russell," said the thunder-stricken Mary. "I see you believe all you say, and that you thoroughly misunderstand me. Holding such opinions, of course you could not consent to your son's marriage with so unprincipled a person as you believe me to be. But matters cannot go on thus for another day. Allow me to ask you a few questions."

"As many as you please," replied Lady Russell, seating herself on the seat where she had found Mary at first; for they had returned to it again.

Mary did not sit down, but stood firmly and in a very erect posture, for she "was meek and

bold," and had determined to ascertain the whole of her fate. "If I, or John ——"

"Mr. John Russell," said Lady Russell.

"As you please—I know nothing of the conventionalities of society. It is so natural to call those we love by familiar names."

"Unblushing impudence! A girl talking in that bold way of her love to a young man! You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

"Ashamed of loving your son! Nothing but *his* misconduct could make me ashamed of that. But listen to me, I beg of you, Lady Russell, for much depends on your answer. If I, or your son, or any one else, could convince you that your opinion of me is utterly false, and that I am guiltless of this deceit and treachery—and if you found, from John himself, that our union was essential to his happiness—would you oppose it then?"

"Most assuredly."

"Why?"

"Because you have neither birth, nor fortune, nor connexion."

"If I could prove to you that my birth is better than your son's?"

"You are penniless."

"But John is not."

"He will be if he marry you, for his father will disinherit him."

"Then my path is clear—we must not marry in such circumstances."

"Spoken like a sensible girl!" said Lady Russell, with animation. "John must go back to India soon; this childish fancy will soon pass away, and he will forget you. I know the nature of men." Lady Russell, in her thought of her son, never remembered what Mary must feel at these words. Mary merely grasped the arm of the chair on which Lady Russell sat, while the latter spoke thus: "Having settled this matter, I will now mention one on which I was coming to speak with you when I overheard Mr. John Russell's words to you as he went away, which put it all out of my head. Sir John and I have been consulting about your brother and yourself. Charles is a fine youth, and Sir John will follow

out Mr. Russell's original plan for his advancement in India. It merely requires interest. So he is provided for. Now for yourself."

"Do not trouble yourself about me, Lady Russell," interrupted Mary, with a slight movement of pride; "I am capable of supporting myself. My father told me that my education is far superior to that of girls in general; therefore, I can maintain myself by teaching."

"Quite right, my dear girl! That is an honourable and praiseworthy determination. As it would perhaps be more agreeable for you to remain with those who know you than to go among strangers, Sir John and I are desirous of engaging you as governess to our children. You will, of course, have a handsome salary, as your eminent qualifications deserve."

Mary was now more astonished than before. "Is it possible? Do I hear you rightly, Lady Russell? I can quite understand that, with your opinion of my character, and judgment of my past conduct, you should object to my becoming your son's wife. Were I the mean, deceitful,

treacherous creature you have described, I were indeed no wife for your son ; but how, then, can I be fit for what you must surely consider an equally responsible and important position—that of governess to your little children ? Oh, surely, surely, Lady Russell, there is something wrong in all this matter. I do not comprehend more than my duty in it, at the present moment. I decline your offer. I would rather live among strangers than among those who think of me as you do. Besides, as I said before, I love your son. You cannot suppose that I shall cease to love him at your bidding ;—and our daily intercourse——”

“Oh ! he is going away immediately ; the carriage is ready to take him and Sir John to town this moment. He does not know that he will not return to-night, nor to-morrow ; and the next day we all go to Hastings, where he will not follow us, for he will sail for India, on business for his father, in less than a month.”

Just at that moment the sound of carriage wheels was heard. Mary suddenly began running

towards the house—she was too late. When she arrived at the hall door, she saw the carriage turning out at the gate. She asked a servant, who was standing near, who had just driven away? He replied, “Sir John and Mr. Russell”—they were gone to town. Poor Mary turned away, and hurried down an alley in the garden to hide the bitter tears which began to overflow her eyes. As yet, she had not sought or had time to analyse her conflicting emotions : but her mind was too well regulated to allow her to remain long a prey to the passionate grief that overwhelmed her. She was collecting her strength, and endeavouring to ascertain the best line of conduct to pursue, when she again met Lady Russell. That lady approached, and, with a sneer, asked whether she had seen her “betrothed,” as she called him. Mary replied that she had not. “She regretted it the more, as she was aware of the pain he would suffer when he discovered how grossly he had been deceived.”

Lady Russell smiled, and replied that “it was better they should both suffer a little pain then,

than that they should suffer more hereafter. But now, Mary, you had better come in. This matter will soon blow over, and you will be happy again."

"I think not, madam ; and I would rather not sleep another night in this house."

"Where do you mean to go ?"

"I know a kind lady in Croydon, who will receive me until I can find employment for myself."

"Nonsense, Mary, you must not go in this abrupt manner. I cannot allow it. You are under my care."

"Excuse me, Lady Russell, I am not under your care, and I will not remain under your roof—you have insulted and ill-treated me, and I cannot forget it."

Saying this, Mary walked away. Tired, heart-sick, and wretched as she was, she immediately set about putting up her wardrobe and the few articles which had been given her by Mr. Russell. She rang her bell, and desired the maid to pack up all those things, and send them immediately

to Mrs. Martin's. She then examined her stock of money, the value of which she did not know. She had about thirty pounds in cash, besides a hundred pounds which had been accumulating in a Savings' Bank since the time when her mother became a widow, and which she had not thought of until now. When she had arranged a plan for her proceedings, she called Bennett, the old housekeeper, to her room, and told her she was going to leave the house that night; that it would be painful to her to bid good-bye to all the servants then; but that, as she was going to remain at Mrs. Martin's, she hoped to see them all there. If any letters or parcels were sent for her, she trusted to her (Mrs. Bennett) to forward them directly.

When Mrs. Bennett had recovered her astonishment at this unexpected news, she proceeded to declare her "moral certainty that she could guess the cause of all this—it was a sure thing that my lady was no friend to Miss Mary, nor ever had been, for all her civil words in poor old master's time. But to turn so sweet a young lady out in this way, was cruel and heathenish."

Mary explained that it was her own will to go. "Oh, yes, of course it was; but it was my lady's unkindness that made her wish to go." She ended by saying, significantly, that "servants saw more of what went on among gentlefolks than gentlefolks think for."

Mary took an affectionate leave of old Mrs. Bennett, who was really fond of her, and then went to the nursery, to see the children for the last time. She did not tell them they would not see her again, or a great outcry would have resounded in the nursery. She walked through the house for the last time. With a heavy heart she paused in every room; and when she came to old Mr. Russell's study, she almost lost courage. But there was much yet for her to do; and, forcibly repressing her feelings, she left the house, carefully avoiding the room in which she knew Lady Russell was seated.

She walked slowly to Mrs. Martin's cottage, which was that which had been rented by her own mother. Mrs. Martin was a professor of music, and had taught Mary, who was devotedly

fond of her. The indignation of Mrs. Martin, when Mary told her little story, was strong and lasting. She took a deep dislike to the whole of the Russell family, not excepting Mary's lover, whom she blamed for not preventing his mother's ill-treatment of Mary. After she had taken up her residence with Mrs. Martin, Mary had a severe illness, which lasted several months. During this time, Sir John Russell's family removed from the neighbourhood, and Charles Stuart passed his examination, and was ready to sail for India when his beloved sister should be restored to health and was, in some way, provided for. Poor Charles was as proud as Mary; and after he learned from Mrs. Martin the reason of his sister's sudden removal from Sir John Russell's house, he wrote a letter to that gentleman, declining all offers of assistance from him, and reproaching him with the unjustifiable treatment of Mary by Lady Russell.

Fortunately, Charles had a sum in the funds sufficient to defray the expenses of his outfit to India, and to pay Mary's board in some respect-

able family for a year, at least. After that time Mrs. Martin felt sure that she could obtain for her an appointment in a good family, as governess. These necessary matters being settled, Charles watched Mary's recovery anxiously. When she was strong enough to converse on the subject, she asked Mrs. Martin what news she had to tell her of John Russell. "None, except that he has gone to India."—"Has he not been here?"—"No." "Has he not written?"—"No." "There is some mistake," said Mary. "He must have written—his letters must have been lost." Mrs. Martin did not like to shock her young friend by saying plainly that she believed John was as bad as his mother, therefore she only said: "My dear, young men seldom know their own minds. He fancied he loved you, I have no doubt; but he was mistaken; his parents have proved it to him, and he has forgotten you by this time, or he would have overcome every obstacle placed between you; we should have seen him—he would have written. You have nothing to do now but to forget him;

your pride will help you there. So unstable a young man—one so easily diverted from a purpose—could not be worthy of you, Mary. I think you have had a fortunate escape.”

“You may be right, dear Mrs. Martin, but I cannot think so now,” said Mary; “but do not ever recur to this subject again.”

“That’s my wise, sensible Mary; do not talk on any matter, and it will fade away from the mind.”

Mary never spoke of John Russell to Mrs. Martin again; she recovered her health and activity, although not her former high spirits; and Mrs. Martin, with whom she resided, thought she had quite “got over her foolish fancy for that foolish young man.” But Mrs. Martin was mistaken. Mary loved young Russell, and her trust in him was not shaken by all the appearances against him. She might never see him again, but she should die convinced of his truth. To Charles, who was two years younger than herself, she never mentioned the matter at all; and he, with natural delicacy, never alluded to it

in his conversations with her. At last the time came when he must depart. This was a sad trial to both ; but Charles hoped in a very short time to be able to send for her to live with him in India, and his grief at parting was less than hers.

She remained a short time longer as a boarder with Mrs. Martin ; but she soon found that employment was now a necessary of life to her—her brain was else too busy for happiness. She sought, and soon obtained, a situation as governess in a family about to travel through France and Germany. What occurred during the ten years of her residence in different families abroad, I cannot tell you. She returned to England at the age of thirty, in a weak state of health. Her friend Mrs. Martin was as kind as ever ; and, thanks to her brother's unfailing remittances, she knew not the evils of poverty. After a time she became stronger, and once more determined to teach, much to the dissatisfaction of Mrs. Martin, who wished her to go to her brother in India. But Charles Stuart, who was now a captain, had lately married, and his sister deemed

her presence in his household unsuitable, and preferred teaching. She entered into several families, and at last undertook the office of head teacher in a school belonging to a lady whose friendship she gained while on the continent. That lady was Mrs. Anderson, of Avenue House.

We all stared at Miss Allan as if we thought her mad—all but Ellen, who exclaimed, "I see ! I see ! She did not trust in vain. 'Mary' is our Miss Stuart, and 'John Russell' is the gentleman who has just come to see her. It was his letter which caused her sudden emotion yesterday. Oh ! say I am right !"

"You are right," said Miss Allan, who, though her eyes were filled with tears, smiled at Ellen's vehemence. "When I began this story, I certainly never imagined that I could bring it to this conclusion. I did not intend to tell you who 'Mary' was. I meant to give you a true picture of a faithful and a patient spirit. I did not dream that I could show you how such a spirit is rewarded occasionally in this world. Remember, dear girls, it is not always that quiet, unobtrusive

merit, steady trustfulness, and firm endurance meet with so signal a reward on this earth. God ordereth all things as seemeth best to him. Miss Stuart might have lived on still as she has lived, and have died without any further assurance that her faith was not misplaced; yet I think she would have been steadfast to the end."

"I am sure she would," said Ellen; and I echoed her words.

"Hi! hi! hi!" cried Inez. "So Miss Stuart will not die an old maid, after all!"—"Well, I'm sure," lisped Susanna Jones, "I never should have thought there could have been anything romantic about Miss Stuart."—"She is so odd-looking!" said Grace.—"Well, but," asked Maria Chester, "can't you tell us anything more, dear Miss Allan? I'm sure she cannot mind all the world knowing *now*; and though we are only school-girls, yet she knows we love her, and shall be glad to hear of her happiness."

"All I can tell you now," said Miss Allan, putting on a mysterious smile, is this—"that 'John Russell' is now 'Sir John'; that he was

altogether tricked and deceived by his parents ; that he wrote repeatedly to Mary, and received no answer—his letters were intercepted ; that he went to India, firmly persuaded that Mary had cast him off—for what cause he could not divine, except it might be that she was too proud to unite herself with a family who considered her inferior to themselves. He refused every alliance proposed to him by his friends ; he is still unmarried. He met Captain Stuart, accidentally, about eight months since ; circumstances brought about an explanation. As his parents were both dead, and his family all established, he had nothing to keep him in India, and therefore started for England immediately, with a determination to seek Mary and make her his wife, if possible. He has found her, and I think she will marry him——”

“Of course she will ! Oh, what a sweet man he must be !” said one.—“And Miss Stuart will be *Lady Russell* !” said another.—“Just fancy calling her ‘my lady’ and ‘your ladyship.’”—“Yes ; what fun !”—“Will she be married from this house ? Oh, would it not be delightful to have a wedding

here?—But who is that young lady Mr. Russell brought with him?”

“One of his nieces,” replied Miss Allan. She then left the room, begging us to be quite quiet and orderly during her absence. As soon as she was gone, loud was the talking and diverse were the opinions expressed among us on this extraordinary circumstance.

“When would Miss Stuart be married?”—
“Where?”—“Would she teach in the school-room again?”—“Certainly not.”—“How was it possible *Lady Russell* could teach in a school!”—
“But she was not married yet.”—“And who was to take her place till the holidays?” “Fortunately it only wanted three weeks to the holidays.”
“Oh Miss Stuart would never be able to teach and buy her wedding-clothes, and drive out every day with Sir John Russell, and of course she would do *that*!”—“*That*? which is that?”—
“Oh I don’t know!”—“I wonder what Miss Stuart will be married in. She is too old and too brown for white satin.”—“No, she will not wear white satin, that is sure.”—“I dare say she

will look much prettier when she is nicely dressed."—"Who will be her bridesmaids, I wonder?"—"Oh who do you think?" And so went on the busy young voices and the busy young brains, until tea-time, for Miss Allan did not return; she was with Miss Stuart. We, of course, did not notice the flight of time. Young girls never do when they are talking of a wedding. And why should they not talk of, and take an interest in, so important an affair?

We did not see Miss Stuart at tea-time, but to our utter astonishment, she came into the school-room after tea, and took her seat as usual, and reckoned up all our tickets as usual, and spoke and looked as usual—no not *quite* as usual—she looked brighter, and I thought almost pretty, especially when she took her seat for evening prayers; but, of course, not one of us dared to say a word of congratulation, or anything to intimate that we were aware that something had happened.

CHAPTER XVII.

PREPARING TO ACT A PLAY.

GENTLE reader ! Did you ever take part in a school-girls' play ?—I mean a real, *acted* play. If you never did, I pity you, for it is not easy to give you an idea of the amount of fun and innocent enjoyment which it occasions. We always acted a play on the sixteenth of June—Mrs. Anderson's birth-day—just three days before the Midsummer holidays. This "play," as we called it, was in general a very trifling affair in itself ; a dramatic proverb, or slight vaudeville, *revised for the use of a Ladies' school* ; but we always contrived to make a prodigious fuss and bustle in getting it up.

It was a primary object with us to keep the whole matter secret from Mrs. Anderson and

most of the teachers until the very night of performance. During the month before the holidays, at all odd moments of play-time, and on Saturday afternoons especially, the *corps dramatique*, for the time being, might be seen, sitting still, or walking about in groups, repeating their parts to each other, disputing about tones, looks, attitudes—tutoring, and refusing to be tutored. Here might be seen the rehearsal of a quarrel-scene; there, a tender separation. If you chanced to be going into the room, you would come into violent contact with an infuriated character making an exit in a towering rage. Quite heedless of the damage you might sustain, she would pass by you without vouchsafing a word of apology, apparently unconscious of anything but her assumed character; or, it might be, that your complaint of the blow you had received would be met by an indignant inquiry of “Why you could not keep out of the way just at that moment when she was obliged to bounce out of the room?” The awkwardness of Caroline Webster on these occasions was, fortunately, less than ordinary, or I am sure Avenue

House would have been converted into a hospital. Strange as it may seem, the most awkward girl was one of our very best actors ; especially for old men and middle-aged women.

It was amusing enough to sit in a remote corner and watch the various learners and repeaters of parts ;—the words being all undistinguishable amid the general hum. Such exaggerated expressions of face !—such embraces !—such gestures !—such floods of tears !—and such laughter ! But I think the sound of the laughter was always distinct enough to make me imagine that there must be a maniac in the play. I suppose a laugh is a very difficult thing to act well.

On the unexpected entrance of Mrs. Anderson, there would be a general rustling and thrusting away of papers containing “parts ;” and a very bad attempt to look as if nothing were going on. On these occasions, Mrs. Anderson would smile at them, and say—“ Well, young ladies !” or, “ Well, my dears ! you seem rather busy. May I know what occupies you just now ?” To which there would be a loud outcry of “ Oh, no ;

we cannot tell you, ma'am ! " and a due accompaniment of significant looks and smiles, quite as exaggerated as if they were acting, which in truth they were ; as nobody supposed Mrs. Anderson was really ignorant of the nature of their occupation. That lady would shake her head gravely, and say, " Oh ! very well, my dears ; I shall inquire no farther." This did not imply any great forbearance on her part, as in the course of twelve years she must have become tolerably familiar with a circumstance that occurred before every summer holidays.

At the close of that particular half-year, when Miss Stuart was to leave the school, we had, as our play-bills announced, "*An Unrivalled Display of Theatrical Talent.*" On this occasion, our new favourite, Miss Allan, very kindly exerted herself to assist us in every way. She wrote out all our parts ; she taught them to most of us ; she was stage-manager, and contrived all our dresses for us. It then became a question among us, how we ever had managed without her ; certainly, as this particular performance showed, by comparison

with previous enactments of plays, we had done very badly. I may as well relate a few particulars connected with the getting up of our plays, for we had *two* on this occasion.

One night, as Mary Stephens, Ellen Warwick, and I were undressing to go to bed, Miss Allan came into our room, with a little book in her hand. "I have brought a play to read to you, my dear girls. I want to know whether you think it will do for you to act? I think it will."

"Oh! you darling!" cried Ellen, embracing her. "What is it? tragedy, comedy, or farce?"

"Farce," said Miss Allan.

"Oh, I like tragedy best," said I.

"Why, Margaret," inquired Miss Allan, smiling, "you would not have a party of school-girls attempt a tragedy? without men, or even the proper dresses for men,—without scenery or any necessary paraphernalia,—to say nothing of the greatest want,—*tragic talent*. I do not think any one could read a tragic scene with the slightest effect, except, perhaps, Ellen or Maria Chester. If we were to attempt a tragedy, it

would be more farcical than the best farce. What do you think of 'Macbeth' cast thus? *Duncan*, Miss Jane Worthington; *Macbeth*, Miss Warwick; *Banquo*, Miss Granby; *Macduff*, Miss Chester; *Lady Macbeth*, Miss Susan Jones."

Here we all burst into a laugh, and Miss Allan went on. "*Scene—A Heath*; to wit,—the bare floor of the dining-room. *Scene—Castle of Inverness*; ditto. *Dresses—Duncan's royal robe*,—my old travelling cloak, with ermine boas tacked along the edge. *Macbeth*,—with a plaid shawl tied round the waist; legs scrupulously covered up; arms bare, to be sure, but soft and white, not fitted for a shield,—said shield, a large saucepan-lid."

I acknowledged at once the absurdity, and, with a lingering love for tragedy, was obliged to confess that light or domestic comedy would better suit our resources.

"I grant," said Miss Allan, seriously, "we might be able to get up detached scenes pretty well; but upon the whole, it is better to have

something like this (holding up the little book), which is certain to make the audience laugh, whether it be well or ill acted."

"What is it?" asked Mary.

"It is *Dr. Diworth*."

"Charming! charming!" cried Ellen. "I have seen it at the Haymarket Theatre. Oh, Margaret! it is the cleverest thing you ever heard,—the cleverest thing in the world! You will be delighted with it, Mary. It is just the thing for us to act. You will both say so when you hear it. May I act *Mrs. Diworth*?"

"No! indeed, Ellen; you may not," said Miss Allan. "I depend upon you for the Doctor himself."

"Oh! I would rather not act a man;—I shall do it so badly;—and the Doctor requires such very good acting. Just think of Farren!"

"Indeed! I shall do no such thing!" cried Miss Allan, playfully; "I can only think of *you*, in a snuff-coloured coat and a pig-tail. If you do not take the part, nobody else can."

"If you really think so, I will certainly try

and do my best ; but *Mrs. Dilworth* would be much easier."

"That is precisely why you must take the Doctor, then. Come, Ellen, you must not be too modest."

"Will you read us the play, before you tell us how you wish it to be cast?" said Mary, who was already in bed.

"Yes, dear ; I think that will be best. Now, girls, make haste into bed, for I cannot read in comfort when there is any one moving about."

We were soon comfortably reclining in our respective beds ; and Miss Allan, taking her seat on Ellen's bed, which was between the others, began the clever farce, called *Dr. Dilworth*. We girls were in an ecstasy of amusement throughout the reading ; and when it was finished, Mary and I declared that there was only one objection to our trying it ;—not one of the girls could keep her countenance while acting. It was so very ludicrous. We then talked over all matters connected with it. It was by far the cleverest

play we had ever had. Mrs. Anderson and Miss Stuart would be so pleased with it. It was very nice to have so good a play this time, on account of Miss Stuart's marriage. Besides our usual audience of Mr. and Miss Barton, Mrs. and the Misses Merton, and the rest of Mrs. Anderson's friends, we should be sure to have Sir John Russell and his niece. Miss Allan listened kindly, and with interest to all we said, and, at length, began to speak of the *cast*. "Tell me," she said, "if you think I have selected well. *Dr. Dilworth*, Ellen; *Mrs. Dilworth*, Maria Chester."

"Very good! She is sure to do it well."

"*Zoe*, Susan Jones."

"She will look it well," said Mary, "and I dare say she can be taught how to act it."

"But why not Margaret?" asked Ellen, seeing no other part in the piece for me.

"Because Susan is very anxious to act this time, you know; and she will look pretty, and do well enough for *Zoe*. Margaret is not so anxious to act, and—I have something *in petto* for

her. Now for the grand puzzle—who shall be *Terentius*, and unite the graces of a lover with an Irish brogue? I cannot decide between Caroline Webster and Kate Murray."

"If Caroline likes her part," said Ellen, "not one among us can act it better; and her awkwardness would not spoil the part; it might add to the drollery."

"I am glad I am not to be *Zoe*," said I; "she will certainly give the lady a black eye instead of a tender embrace."

"Never mind that," said Ellen. "But what is there for Kate? She acts cleverly; and Laura will be in an ill-temper from now until the holidays, if Kate has no part in the play."

"Perhaps Kate had better take *Terentius*?" suggested Mary.

"I think not," said Miss Allan; "Caroline will do better for *Terentius*. Kate can be *Mr. Paddington*."

"Oh! Laura will consider it a foul aspersion on Kate's intellectual powers, if she has not the best character in the play. To make her a cypher

like *Mr. Paddington* will infuriate Laura. It will not do ! ”

“ Who is to be *Syntax* ? ” asked Mary.

“ Grace Wilson,” replied Miss Allan.

“ Nothing can be better than *that* ! ” we all cried at once. “ How she will enjoy it ! ”

“ But it will never do to give Kate only *Mr. Paddington*, and to give Margaret nothing,” said Ellen, thoughtfully.

Just then Miss Allan drew a roll of paper from her pocket, and said, “ I can remove that difficulty, for I want to get up an after-piece.”

“ *Two* pieces ? ” — “ How nice ! ” — “ What is it ? ”

“ A pretty dramatic proverb of Mrs. Jamieson’s, called “ *Much Coin much Care.* ”

We were all unacquainted with it, and Miss Allan proceeded to read it. It was of course very much approved, and the *cast* was easily made, the four characters being thus filled : — *Dick*, the hero, was to be for Kate Murray (even Laura could not desire a better part for Kate). *Margery* was to be acted by Ellen. *I* was to be

the fine lady, and Inez was to be my French maid. I take it for granted, dear reader, that you know this trifle well.

Mary did not *act*, but she was of great assistance to those who did ; besides, she was to play an overture on the important night ; and sing songs between the acts, to keep the audience in good temper. The next day Miss Allan read the plays to her selected *corps dramatique* ; and her arrangements gave general satisfaction. I never heard so little grumbling on a similar occasion. Laura, too, was highly delighted when she heard from Kate that *she* was to act in *both* pieces.

It would be impossible to describe the histrionic *furore* that prevailed during the following week ; the whole leisure time being devoted to part-learning and rehearsals, that we might get tolerably perfect in the plays before we were obliged to turn our whole attention to preparing for the school examinations.

I very well remember that on the Saturday, Miss Allan borrowed the Grey-room from Miss Crawford, for the whole afternoon ;—she per-

suaded the girls who did *not* act, to mend the garments of those who *did*; and, collecting all these last-named together, she shut herself up in the Grey-room with them.

Here we had a regular rehearsal of each piece; and, as Miss Allan had instructed each girl individually, both plays went off well, and she was pleased. The grand difficulty of the part-learning being achieved, the next thing to be discussed was, the question of *costume*. *Dr. Dilworth* must have a hat, a gold-headed cane, and a large coat that would wrap him round. Such is the style of a middle-aged gentleman's dress in a lady's school. *Syntax* insisted on having knee-breeches, a footman's jacket, a white apron, and a red wig. Grace considered it correct to make *Syntax* as hideous as possible. *Terentius* must have a dashing looking cloak, a hat, and cane;—and *Mr. Paddington*.—a hat, and great coat. All these things Miss Allan contrived to procure for us, through her young friend, Ellen's cousin Lewis, as we afterwards learned. Then, there must be portraits or busts of *Walker*, *Murray*, and

Dilworth ; so Miss Allan and I agreed to draw enormous black chalk caricatures of them, from the miniature portraits in the spelling-books ; and I may add, that we succeeded admirably, as you would say, if you could see our performances, which I still preserve carefully, in memory of those dear old school-days.

When all the important matters were settled, Miss Allan begged us to suspend our laughing and talking for a few minutes, as she had something to say to us. We became silent, and crowded round her chair.

“ My dear girls, as we are now in a very forward state with our plays, I think it will be well to put them from our minds during the next fortnight, because you must all be well prepared for your examinations. Show as much skill and industry with them as you have with the plays, and I am sure Mrs. Anderson and Miss Stuart will be as much pleased as I am now. There are now exactly three weeks to the holidays—Monday fortnight is the first examination day ;” (a groan from the girls ;) “ those two dreaded days once over,

we can have all Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday to attend again to our plays. Friday evening they will be acted ; and on Saturday morning you all go home."

"Home ! home ! home !" echoed the happy girls ; "think of going home !"

And they none of them thought, at that moment, that neither Miss Allan nor I could go *home*. *My* home was gone to India, with my parents ; and Miss Allan had no home ; but I think she forgot that herself, as she looked round on the happy faces of those merry girls.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE END OF THE HALF-YEAR.

NEVER were girls more busy than we of Mrs. Anderson's school during the next fortnight. There was so very much to be done. We had to prepare for our examinations; to keep up our interest in the plays (that was not difficult); to talk over everything connected with them (that was very easy); to finish long-neglected pieces of fancy-work and drawings, which were destined for presents to friends in the holidays; and more than all—we had to speculate on Miss Stuart's marriage; the *how*,—and the *when*,—and the *where*.

I had always loved and respected Miss Stuart; but I now found that many of the girls, who had formerly stigmatised her as an ugly, cross, old

thing, were far more attentive to her than I had ever been. I could not help observing how very different was the tone of manners to the future Lady Russell, from that which prevailed formerly to the mere English teacher. Even school-girls feel instinctively that a married woman is a more important personage in the world than an old maid; a woman who has a husband to support her, than one who supports herself; a woman who has a handsome house and an elegant equipage, than one who has no house, and when she rides, rides in an omnibus or a hired cab. Few grown-up persons are capable of judging their fellow-creatures independently of the adventitious circumstances of station and fortune, and fewer still of regulating their behaviour accordingly. The old story holds good now,—there are not many who *know* what is right, and fewer still who practise it. It is not by any means easy to “pay honour to whom honour is due”—and in proportion to the rarity of the payment should be the approbation we award to those persons who *do* render it.

As I said before, I had always liked Miss Stuart; but *now* it seemed to me, that I had been blind to a thousand agreeable points in her mind, manners, and person; and I asked myself whether this was entirely owing to my being more disposed to see good qualities in her *now* that she was a person whose station in the world was equal to, or above, my own; or whether the sun of prosperity had not expanded those flowers in Miss Stuart's character, which were before undeveloped. It seemed to me that Ellen was not fond of talking about Miss Stuart's marriage. This might be because she could not bear to recur to her separation from a teacher whom she respected and loved so much. I also noticed that Ellen was the only girl in the school who showed less eagerness to please Miss Stuart in trifles than formerly; and I fancied this came from Ellen's great fault, pride—the pride which fears to be mean.

One morning, as we were all coming in from the garden, I observed that Ellen gathered only two roses from the single bush in her own garden.

This favourite bush had been very productive this year; and, for the last fortnight, Ellen had supplied each of the teachers with a rose every morning. I should except Miss Crawford, whom Ellen did not like, and to whom she never gave flowers or anything else, that I remember.

"Do you not want another rose, Ellen?" said I.

"No," she replied, "I have only two half-blown buds left; I shall leave them until to-morrow."

"Who do you intend the two you have just gathered for?"

"For Miss Allan and Madame."

"And none for dear Miss Stuart?" asked I, in some surprise.

"Oh! she does not want my roses now."

"Not want them, Ellen?—why? *Not* want roses? I do believe they are the only flowers she ever cares anything about."

"Yes; but she has so many great pleasures now, that I have settled to give these little ones to Miss Allan and Madame. They shall have

these two to-day, and those two to-morrow, Margaret."

I expressed some surprise that Ellen did not feel more inclined to give flowers to Miss Stuart, now that she was become so interesting to us all. Ellen then told me that she had been thinking on this subject lately, and was quite sure it was wrong not to give attention and sympathy where they were most wanted ; just as it is wrong for a rich man to leave his money to those who have enough and to spare ; while others, as nearly connected with him, and quite as deserving, are actually wanting the necessaries of life. She had heard of such things in real life, and she had read of them in books. Now Miss Allan was still a poor teacher, and so was Madame d'Almette ; and Miss Stuart was about to become a rich and beloved wife. Ellen ended by saying she "should like always to act on the best principle, even in trifles ; so, as I have not roses enough for all, it is Miss Stuart who must go without one."

I then said what *I* had thought about Miss



FLOWERS FOR A FAVOURITE.

Stuart's change of position, and the change of manner towards her which I had noticed among the girls.

By the time we had discussed this matter, every one had left the garden, and we had to run fast, in order to be in time for our classes. But there was no need for hurry, as we found on reaching the school-room. All the girls were crowding round Miss Stuart's chair, offering their flowers. "Oh! you must take mine, ma'am!"—"And mine."—"Oh! and mine."—"And this pretty carnation"—"and this"—"and this." Not one of the girls was near Miss Allan or Madame; each was alone at her table, waiting for her pupils.

"Was I not right?" asked Ellen, in a low tone, while a blush of indignation spread over her face; and she walked up to Miss Allan and Madame, and presented her flowers.

I was very sorry that I had no flowers at that time, but a white camellia, which would blossom the next day. "Yes, Ellen," I whispered; "you *are* right, as you always are, in matters of feeling.

I shall have a beautiful camellia to-morrow, and Miss Stuart shall not have it, as I intended she should."

There was a little circumstance connected with the giving of this camellia, which I will relate, as it may please the reader.

By the evening post, this same day,—the day of the roses,—Ellen received a letter. We were in an agony of astronomical study, for the examination,—she and I,—so she merely glanced at the address, and, with a pleased air, said,—“From Aunt Constance! I shall not read it till we go to bed.” Then, slipping it into her pocket, she plunged once more into “Keith” and the mysteries of the heavens. Bed-time soon came; and, with our heads full of planets, comets, constellations, systems, right ascension, declination, altitude, apogee, nodes, parallax, and periods of revolution, we retired for the night.

Ellen flew to the window, and drew up the blind. “How beautiful! how glorious! Margaret, come here!”

The stars were shining with the greatest bril-

liancy, and we stood together to watch them, and spoke in a low tone of admiration and wonder,—
“Look at Arcturus, Ellen; did you ever see anything so splendid?”

“I have been looking at it for some minutes,” she replied; “and,” she added, with a smile, “I know some one else who is probably looking at Arcturus too.”

“How romantic! Who, pray?”

“Lewis. It is his favourite star,—his destiny star, he says.”

“Your aunt’s letter, Ellen; you have not read it.”

“No,” she cried; “I have actually forgotten it. I must read it directly.” And she left the window, and approached the candle, snuffed it, and then seated herself to read her letter. I also left the window, and drew down the blind,—perhaps to watch her as she read,—perhaps that I might not look at Arcturus any more. “Here is a note from Lewis himself,” said Ellen, taking up a small note, as it fell from the envelope. She read her aunt’s letter first. It seemed to

interest her very much, and she murmured, — “ Dear aunt !—Yes, indeed !—Poor Miss Allan !—Sweet creature !—Love her !—Yes, that I do ! ”

Then, seeing that Mary was not in the room (for *I* was Ellen’s only confidante of things nearest her heart), she read me Mrs. Vaughan’s letter. It was a kind letter, in which Ellen was addressed as a young woman, and not as a silly girl ; there was no sermon and no scolding, though there were words of advice. She said that she was coming to Avenue House to see the play, and that Lewis was to fetch her after it was over. She hoped Ellen loved Caroline Allan, who was very dear to all their (Mrs. Vaughan’s) family. She begged Ellen to be particularly attentive to Miss Allan next Wednesday (the 10th of June) ; it was her birth-day, and the anniversary of a great misfortune. She felt sure Ellen would endeavour to save her all annoyance. Lewis had written to Ellen on this subject. Where Miss Allan was concerned, Lewis always *would* have something to say, &c.

"I was quite sure Miss Allan has known some great misfortune," said Ellen, gravely. "I wonder what it is!"

"Perhaps your cousin's letter will explain it," I suggested.

She opened the little note, and read as follows:—

"My dear Ellen,—Next Wednesday is Miss Allan's birthday. Do not let this be known among your companions, as they might wish to celebrate it in some way, and I know that it would be painful to her. I should do you injustice if I did not confide to you the reason of this. I am sure you are capable of appreciating the wonderful beauty of Miss Allan's character; and so I will tell you why you should *pity*, as well as love her."

"Stop, Ellen," said I. "You must read the rest to yourself."

"Indeed, no!" said Ellen. "Margaret! what *I* may know about Miss Allan, I am sure *you* may know too; for you love her as much as I do."

I could not deny this, and she waved her hand to silence me, and went on reading:—

“I think you do not know the circumstances under which she first became known to my father and mother. She was engaged to be married to my uncle Lewis Vaughan,—my godfather,—one of the noblest creatures God ever made. Soon afterwards she came to live with my mother at Newcastle to help her to teach us all. *I* was old enough then to be alive to her excellence; I was thirteen. She and my uncle have ever since been idols to my heart, and I do not think I can ever again meet with such kind directors or such models of excellence. I went to Germany, as you know. Two years ago, while I was at Bonn, Uncle Lewis came to spend a month or two there on business; was taken suddenly ill, and died in ten days. He had no friend near him but myself. He had always treated me with distinguished kindness, and on his death-bed he spoke to me as to a *man*, although I was not sixteen years old. He talked to me of his greatest earthly treasure, of ‘his Caroline;’ of

her penniless condition, and the necessity there was that she should support herself, as he had but a mere trifle to leave. He made me promise that when I became a man, Miss Allan should never want a friend—such a friend as an unprotected woman always wants; for Miss Allan is an orphan, and has neither brother nor sister. You may imagine, my dear cousin, how much honoured I felt by my uncle's confidence, and how very sacred everything connected with Caroline Allan is to me. As yet, I have only been able to minister to her in trifles, although *she* is good enough to say that I am really useful to her. My uncle died on her birthday, the *10th of June*, just two years ago. Will you, my dear Ellen, save her all unnecessary trouble on that melancholy anniversary? She will not spend the day with us, as my mother wished. She says 'it will be best to employ herself actively, as usual,' and perhaps she is right; but then, she need not be bothered by all the stupid girls in the school. Keep *them* from her if you can. And one thing more, I have to ask of you, dear,—

when you bid her good-night on her birthday, will you give her a white camellia and a carnation? Uncle Lewis always gave her those flowers on that evening. Last year *I* gave them to her, in some doubt as to whether it might not cause pain rather than pleasure; but she was pleased, and, with more than her usual sweetness, said she 'should always wish for those flowers' on her birthday. I am obliged to go down into the North to-morrow, for my father, or I should have contrived to let her have the flowers without troubling you. I am not sorry to take this opportunity of telling you *why* Caroline Allan is so very dear to us, as it may perhaps increase the interest you already feel for her.

"I am, dear Ellen,

"Your affectionate Cousin,

"LEWIS VAUGHAN."

We both remained silent for a few minutes, looking through the vista which this letter opened for us into *the world*—into actual life. We had only looked upon Miss Allan as one of the kindest

and best of teachers ; here she appeared in a very different light. I am quite sure that these interesting and melancholy circumstances in her life made her a thousand times more charming to us than she had been before. She became more interesting than Miss Stuart.

"It is no wonder Lewis is so fond of Miss Allan," said Ellen, "if she was engaged to his uncle. The whole family quite worshipped Mr. Lewis Vaughan."

"Did you ever see him?" I inquired.

"Oh yes; a long time ago! I remember he was a tall, dark man; rather like Lewis in the face; and I remember that I used to be provoked, because when I wanted to play with Lewis, he *would* always be standing beside his uncle, with his great eyes wide open, listening to every word he said. He seemed to care for nobody else while Mr. Vaughan was in the house.

"I now understand," said I, "why the name of Lewis Vaughan always makes Miss Allan change colour, and sometimes brings tears into her eyes."

"Poor Miss Allan!" sighed Ellen. A thought occurred to me.

"Ellen, is it not lucky that my camellia has not yet blossomed? It will be out beautifully by Wednesday. Oh, I am so glad! And I have the best carnations in the school."

"Thank you, dear," cried Ellen; "they will do beautifully. I must write to-morrow, and tell Lewis how well I can manage what he wishes. But here comes Mary."

"Well, Mary, what has kept you so long?"

"Oh, I staid to help Miss Stuart unpack a box of beautifully bound books—a present from Sir John. I think they are for her to give, as keepsakes, to us girls. Do you know?"

"Very likely. Did you see what they were?"

"No; for as soon as that thought came into my head, I did not like to look into them; but the bindings were splendid. I almost forgot to say that there was a most lovely bouquet, all of different sorts of roses, that came with the box. So I suppose you are right, Margaret, and Miss Stuart *does* like roses better than all other flowers.

And," she added, with a sweet smile, "it must be very delightful to have some one who always thinks of giving us the flowers we love best!"

Ellen and I exchanged looks and thoughts of poor Miss Allan.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE EXAMINATIONS.

THE next two weeks passed very rapidly; and Monday, the first day of the examination, came. On that day we were to be examined in English and French; on the next day, in music, Italian, drawing, and those accomplishments which were taught by masters. It was Mrs. Anderson's plan to have us examined by our teachers, in the presence of strangers, who might question us, if they pleased, when the examiner had finished.

At ten o'clock on the said Monday morning, we of the First Class—viz., Ellen, Maria Chester, Kate Murray, Caroline Webster, Miss Peyton, and I—were seated in a row, in the drawing-room, awaiting the entrance of Miss Stuart, who was to examine us, and of Mrs. Anderson and

her friends, who were to act audience on the occasion. In front of us stood an easy chair for Miss Stuart, and beside it a little table, on which were laid our essays and prize compositions, on which we had bestowed our best skill during the past month. We sat in a very nervous state, as you may well suppose. Our fears and our curiosity were both excited by the thought of the strangers who were to be present. "Who was coming?"—"Did anybody know?"—"Yes, old Mr. Barton and his daughter."—"Everybody could tell *that*."—"They always came." Maria "believed that they came on purpose to keep up their knowledge of history and geography." Kate "thought Sir John Russell and his niece were coming." Ellen "was glad of that; she wanted to see him with Miss Stuart." "Why, you don't suppose he will make love to her while she is examining us?" said Maria. "Nonsense, my dear," said Kate; "if she looks as cross this time as she did at the last examination, I am sure he will never make love to her any more." "That's all you know about it,"

said Caroline Webster. — “Miss Stuart never looks cross!” — “Oh! oh!” from Maria and Kate. — “Now, Ellen! Margaret!” cried Caroline (clutching hold of each violently, and almost losing her balance on the chair), “*Does* Miss Stuart ever look *cross*?”

“No,” said Ellen, “she often looks *thoughtful*, and *that* when people are not pretty is often the same as looking cross.”

“Margaret, dear, what do you say?” asked Caroline (giving me another tug).

“Oh! I will say anything you please, dear, if you will not hurt me.”

“Hush! hush! young ladies,” cried *Propriety* (as we called Miss Peyton); “here they come;” and we had scarcely time to settle ourselves and become decorously calm and upright, when Mrs. Anderson entered the room, followed by Mr. and Miss Barton, Mrs. Merton, and the three Misses Merton, and old Captain Berd. These persons we were accustomed to see on similar occasions, and they did not affect us half so much as the two persons who came last into the room; — these

were, Sir John Russell and his niece. The last seemed a shy young lady, about fourteen years old. We had seen her several times, but had not spoken to her,—and now she took a seat on our side of the room, and looked at us with a mixture of wonder and pity.

In a few minutes, Miss Stuart came into the room, looking just as usual, “more like a teacher than a lady love,” as Miss Maria said afterwards. Sir John went immediately to meet her, and as she shook hands with him, and smiled, *I* thought there could be no Kalydor or beauty-wash so good as affection. Maria might say what she pleased, but Miss Stuart was very far from “a fright” at that moment. She bowed with her usual self-possession to the rest of the company, and kissed Miss Russell with kindness, and then took the seat which had been placed for her. Sir John Russell followed her, and with a benevolent smile and a military bow, he said to us,—“Ladies, Mrs. Anderson says I may remain in the room during your examination, if you and Miss Stuart have no objection. May I stay?”—He looked

instinctively at Ellen (she was by far the most intelligent-looking of our party). She replied, with a little embarrassment, "If Miss Stuart pleases."

"Does Miss Stuart please?" asked he, looking at her.

She turned her eyes up to his face with one of her humourous looks, as she said, "To spy the nakedness of the land are ye come. However, if my girls do not mind it, I have no objection. You may stay here and laugh at us, and our female education."

"That is too hard, Mary," said he, laughing, and drawing a chair towards us. "I really *am* curious to see what you can teach, and what these young ladies know."

"Well, sit down, and we will do our best to satisfy you on both points," said she.

The smile died away from Miss Stuart's face, and she became as grave as a judge while she drew nearer to her the small table, and took up one of the essays to read. It was mine; and a terrible state of trepidation I was in while it was

being read. All I remember of it now, is, that it was "on Fame;" that I had taken great pains with it; that Miss Stuart declared she was "extremely pleased with it;" and that Ellen afterwards congratulated me on having written it so well, and took the trouble to copy it out for herself. I confess that at the time I was proud of that philosophical essay! But to proceed. All the other essays and compositions were read, with more or less of approbation from Miss Stuart and the visitors. Our maps were afterwards examined. Of these I remember Miss Peyton's and mine were the neatest, and Maria's and Caroline's the most untidy and careless in colouring and drawing.

After this, Miss Stuart began her examinations *viva voce*. Dear reader, I will spare you this. Suffice it to say, that it was minute, and that we acquitted ourselves generally very well; but Kate not so well as the others. After she had made *one* mistake she seemed to lose her steady clearness of head, and answered frequently *à tort et à travers*.

Miss Stuart and Mrs. Anderson said we had done very well, and the visitors praised us still more highly. Cake and wine were then handed round, and, while we were taking it, Sir John drew his seat closer to Miss Stuart, and Miss Russell ventured to approach us. "How very clever you all are! How much you know!" said she, looking from one to the other in admiration. "Oh, no!" said Ellen, "not so very clever, only we have been well taught." "I have never been taught at all," said she, looking down with a blush; "I shall be quite ashamed to come here after the holidays! I am so ignorant!" "Oh, you will soon learn as much as we know, dear," said Maria, kindly; "I was fifty times more ignorant than you *can* be, when I came here, but Miss Stuart soon made me learn.—But, I forget, Miss Stuart will not be here after the holidays." "Were you not in a fright about those Roman Emperors, Margaret?" asked Caroline, with a contortion of the shoulder that threw half a glass of wine into her lap. "Oh, yes! but I did not mind when we got to Constantine; Miss Stuart

herself seems to think it excusable to make a mistake after that time.”—“Oh, Kate!” said Maria, “what was the matter with you? You seemed to have lost your senses. When you were asked—‘What is the moon supposed to be?’ I expected to hear you say, ‘A green cheese.’” —“How long have you been learning all these things?” asked Miss Russell of me. “Four years.” “That is a long time! I wonder whether I shall know half as much in four years.” “Oh, double as much!” I replied unhesitatingly; “I am a slow learner.”

Our conversation was interrupted by Sir John, who came to tell us that Miss Stuart wished us to go now, and to send the second class down stairs to be examined. We all bade Miss Russell farewell in a whisper; and, bowing or courtesying to the rest of the company, we left the drawing-room.

As soon as we were out of hearing, we gave vent to our long-restrained feelings in mutual embraces and congratulations; and we scampered up-stairs like wild colts—all but Kate, who was discontented with herself.

As we entered the school-room, there was a general exclamation of "Here they come, at last!" and, in a moment, all the girls were surrounding us. "How long you have been!" "Three hours!" "How have you got on?" "Oh, very well indeed," said Ellen. "*All?*" asked Mary Stephens. "No; *I* have done very badly," said Kate.

"Yes, that's a very likely thing, indeed!" said Laura, laughing languidly. "Of course, we all know very well *you* have done the best of all."

"Don't be so silly," said Kate, sharply. "I tell you I have been very stupid, and Miss Stuart is quite displeased with me."

"No, no, Kate dear, do not make matters worse than they are. You ought to have done better, but you did pretty well as it is."

"There is no excuse for me," said Kate, sorrowfully. "I am sure Miss Stuart made all my questions as easy as she could, because she saw how very nervous and stupid I was."

"Kate! if you dare to call yourself stupid again, I'll—I'll—I'll ——."

"Well; ay! ay! ay!" chuckled Inez; "what great wise wonderful thing will you do then?"

"I'll go and answer all wrong in my examination; that I will!" said Laura, her eyes flashing fire,—and the next moment she burst into tears.

I am sorry to say that Inez laughed at her, and a few others joined in the laugh. Laura did look rather ludicrous, to be sure, for her attitude was one of unstudied awkwardness, with her shoulders up to her ears, and her lazy limbs spread out deplorably.

Kate threw a glance of surprise and contempt on the laughers, as she uttered the word "*unfeeling*;" and then, putting her arm round Laura, she tried to console her in her disinterested grief.

"Don't cry, darling! *I* do not mind it much."

"Oh! oh!" sobbed Laura; "such a disappointment! To think that *you* should not come off the very best,—and I made so sure you would."

"Yes; but, Laura, dear, why did you make so sure I should? I have told you very often

that I am not so clever as you think. Miss Stuart will tell you, if you ask her, that I answered shamefully."

"I'm sure I shan't ask her," mumbled Laura ; "I dare say she asked you all the difficult questions, on purpose. A disagreeable old thing ! It is just like her !"

"Oh, Laura !" said Kate ; "it is of no use talking to you. You will persist in saying nonsense when you are angry."

"Ah ! you always defend Miss Stuart !" sobbed Laura, taking a jealous turn ; "I am quite sure you love her much better than you love me."

"Oh, Laura !" said Kate, looking at us in perplexity ; "what shall I say to make you reasonable ?"

Inez *chaunted* in a mocking tone, "Peoples which talk to make foolish peoples sensible is very foolish themselves."

"Do be quiet, Inez !" cried Maria, who always took up the defence of the unhappy.

"Pray, Miss Maria, may I not sing one little song to myself ?"

"No, not when you mean to give others pain," said Maria, angrily.

"Ay! ay! ay! Miss Passionate! Your eyes are so pretty now; like blue fire; and your cheek is as red as the red fire. Always keep in one fury, and you shall be beautiful."

"Do be quiet," reiterated Maria fiercely, unappeased by what Inez meant for a compliment.

Kate was still trying to soothe Laura's wounded feelings. "I am more sorry on your account than on my own, that I did so badly, because I know that *now*, you are cross, you will not take any pains to do well; and all *my* pains of the last month will have been wasted upon you!"

"Yes, there it is!" cried Laura, beginning to cry more vehemently than before. "If it had not been for *me*, you would have had as much time to write your essays and things, and prepare your history and astronomy, as the others. It is all my fault, and Miss Stuart ought to know that. I declare I'll answer all wrong, just to annoy her."

"You forget, Laura," said Kate, "that it will annoy me much more than it will annoy Miss

Stuart. Surely you will not be so ungrateful to me. After my own failure, let me have the satisfaction of seeing you do well."

Laura remained silent for a moment, and then suddenly starting up, she dried her eyes quickly, and, kissing Kate, said, "I *will* do my *very* best. And who knows? I may be able to get a prize, and that would make up for your disappointment, I know. And Kitty, dearest! you are sure to be the first in French."

"Ah! the same thing again! I may *not* be the first in French."

"Well! Madame told me she thought you had a very good chance of being first; and I think she ought to know!" said Laura, tossing her head triumphantly.

At this moment I suddenly recollected that we had forgotten to send the Second Class down stairs, and exclaimed, "Oh, girls! pray make haste, we forgot to tell you that Miss Stuart is waiting for the second class." At these words a mournful shout arose all round the school-room, and each girl flew to get any book or paper she might want.

Then there was a hurried review of their dress, by those who were in the habit of thinking of the impression they should make on strangers. Susan Jones looked at her pretty face in the pocket-mirror, and rolled her two favourite ringlets over her fingers ; and asked Miss Peyton to settle her collar.

“Is Sir John Russell there?” asked Susan. —“Yes, dear, and you can’t think how he *does* stare at one!” answered *Propriety*.—“*Allons ! Allons ! mesdemoiselles ; il faut descendre, tout de suite,*” cried Madame. And we, whose trial was over, nodded gaily to the victims as they left the room ; and we then gave an account of our doings to Miss Allan and Madame d’Almette.

I will not give any more particular account of our remaining examinations, than this,—Laura *did* get a prize, and Kate *was* the first in French. I got the prize for astronomy, and Ellen was better pleased, I believe, than if she had gained it herself. Mary Stephens was rewarded with a selection from Pergolesi’s music for the great progress she had made in drawing.

There was one prize given at Mrs. Anderson's school, called the reward of amiability. This was given by ballot,—each girl voting for the one among her school-fellows whom she considered to have shown the best disposition, and the greatest kindness to others, during the half-year. This time *I* was fortunate enough to obtain it. This prize was always a bible beautifully bound ; and I believe Mrs. Anderson attached more importance to the giving of this prize than to the presentation of any other. I well remember her kind words to me on this occasion,—“ Margaret Granby, your papa and mamma will have reason to be proud of you,—you are amiable, industrious, and have sound intellectual qualities. I hope they will come home soon, before I have *quite* formed the habit of looking on you as my own child.” I need not say that Ellen, with her usual generosity, rejoiced that I had obtained this prize ; and yet I am quite sure Ellen would rather have gained that prize than all the rest put together. She would rather have been loved by the whole school than admired

and praised for her cleverness. Indeed, I cannot tell how it was ; but she was always annoyed by admiration of her abilities or acquirements,—unless I might find a solution of the question in her observation, that “I might talk till doomsday about the advantages of being very clever : she could see but few,—and clever people were never *loved*.”

CHAPTER XX.

SCHOOL THEATRICALS, AND THE BREAKING-UP.

OUR examinations once over, all lessons for the half-year were ended, and Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday were days of delicious idleness and fun, enhanced by a prospect of more idleness and fun for five weeks to come. Miss Stuart was in high spirits; she was always contriving some new amusement for the girls, who were not engaged with Miss Allan in getting up the plays. The weather was lovely, and we were able to be out in that dear old garden nearly all the day. This was a great comfort to Miss Allan, who thus got on with her arrangements without much peeping and prying on the part of the uninitiated. The large dining-room was the theatre,—and this was given up to Miss Allan on Thursday; our

meals being taken in the Grey Room. Grace Wilson was made porter of the theatre, and was to admit no one but those concerned in the play ; and there sat little Grace, on a stool, which brought her eye on a level with the keyhole of the door, through which she reconnoitred every person who knocked ; and when no one knocked, she was plying her needle in any little matter of theatrical stitching which Miss Allan might give her ; but I must confess the eye-service seemed more to her taste than the finger-service.

The dining-room was chosen as a theatre because there was a small room within it, at the farther end, which served as a dressing-room, and for the entrances and exits. Our main difficulty was in getting the green curtain to hang well and to draw well ; but at length Miss Allan and the carpenter managed it capitally. Ernest d'Almette, to his intense delight, was admitted into our circle ; and Miss Allan made use of his clever little legs and arms in climbing up steps and knocking in nails for

her; to say nothing of sending him out every half-hour to buy some trifle that was found to be indispensable. As Miss Allan told his mother, "*C'était un enfant charmant. Il pouvait tout faire, tout voir, tout entendre.*" When he had nailed up the last wax-light in its place, and all the arrangements were completed, he made Miss Allan, and Grace, and me seat ourselves in the middle of the benches that had been placed for the spectators, while he and Mary Stephens drew back the green curtain (which opened in the middle), and tried various ways of festooning it back on each side; and when Miss Allan had decided which way looked the best, he made Mary practise drawing it in that way for about fifty times,—exclaiming each time, "*Mais c'est une chose bien importante! N'est-ce pas, mademoiselle?*"

Before dinner-time on Friday (the night of performance), all the stage arrangements were made,—all the dresses ready, except a cobbler's leather apron, and a set of cobbler's tools for *Dick*. These Miss Allan commissioned Ernest to hire

from a cobbler in the neighbourhood, directly after dinner, and she promised him not to have her last grand rehearsal until he came back. As soon as dinner was over, Ernest set off on his errand, and the girls snatched up their parts, to study them once more before the final trial. Miss Allan sent them all into the garden to do that,—all but me. She called me back, saying, “Margaret, you write a beautiful text-hand. I want you to help me.” We locked ourselves in the dining-room, or “the Theatre,” as we then called it; and Miss Allan produced some large sheets of paper, on which we made at least a dozen copies of the following play-bill, which she had drawn up for the occasion :—

Theatre Royal, Avenue House.

UNRIVALLED DISPLAY OF THEATRICAL TALENT.

June 16th, 183—.

ON THIS NIGHT ONLY WILL BE PERFORMED THE IRRESISTIBLY
FUNNY FARCE CALLED

DR. DILWORTH.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

DR. DILWORTH	<i>Miss Warwick.</i>
SYNTAX	<i>Miss G. Wilson.</i>
TERENTIUS O'LOUGHLIN	<i>Miss Webster.</i>
MR. PADDINGTON	<i>Miss Murray.</i>
MRS. DILWORTH	<i>Miss Chester.</i>
ZOE	<i>Miss Jones.</i>

AFTER WHICH WILL BE PERFORMED MRS. JAMESON'S CELEBRATED
DRAMATIC PROVERB,

MUCH COIN MUCH CARE.

DICK THE COBBLER	<i>Miss Murray.</i>
MARGERY (HIS WIFE)	<i>Miss Warwick.</i>
LADY AMARANTHE	<i>Miss Granby.</i>
JUSTINE (HER FRENCH MAID)	<i>Miss Olivarez.</i>

Scenery, Dresses, &c., by Miss ALLAN, the Manager.

OVERTURE BY MISS STEPHENS.

*Doors open at half-past Six.—Performance to
begin at Seven.*

N.B.—The Gentlemen in the Gallery are requested not to throw each other over into the Pit, as it is likely to break the benches.

The last was thought highly amusing. As soon as this writing business was over, and Ernest had returned, we had rehearsals of each piece. Miss Allan was quite satisfied with them, and then sent us all to refresh ourselves in the garden till tea-time (half-past five), while she lay down on a sofa in the theatre quite alone, to rest from her fatigue, for she was very tired.

I think, my dear reader, you have heard enough of the plays, and since you cannot see them, I will only add that they were triumphantly successful. Some of the spectators declared that it was as good as being at a real theatre; and others, among whom were Miss Stuart and Sir John Russell, that it was much *better* than being at a real theatre. I am sure all the actors agreed with them. Miss Allan established a lasting reputation as a purveyor and preparer of school-plays.

As I never went home for the holidays, "the Breaking-up Day" was generally a melancholy one to me; but this time it was not so dull as usual, for Ellen was not to go away until the

evening; and we stood at the drawing-room window, watching all the other girls go away.

First came the Jones's carriage, with its fine horses and smart livery; and Mrs. Jones alighted—gorgeous in feathers and velvet and satin. In a short time she got in again, and Susan and Sophy after her, and away they went. Then came a decent man-servant driving a gig, and he carried off Miss Peyton and her two boxes. Then came an elegant chariot for Grace Wilson, and in it was my early friend Rose, who was grown into a handsome young woman; she had a long chat with Ellen and me before Grace was ready to depart; Grace had always so much to say to Maria just at the last. And now as the Wilsons' chariot drove off, we saw a travelling carriage with postillions drive up the avenue, and Maria flew out of the house to meet it, crying "Papa! Papa!"—It stopped; a gentleman sprung out, and Maria was in her father's arms, heedless of servants, or the many eyes that might be watching her from the windows of the house. In a quarter of an hour she was whirling away on the

road to Devonshire. Then came Mary Stephens's mamma and her two brothers; they did not come in a carriage, and Mary went home quite happy in an omnibus from the end of the lane. Then came *Don Juan* for Inez, who was mad with delight at the idea of going to spend the holidays away from school. Then came another carriage, which, in the distance, we supposed was for Laura, who was brimful of happiness; for Kate Murray was to spend the first part of the holidays with her, at the house of her aunt in Portman Square; and the two girls were looking eagerly for the arrival of some one to fetch them. But this carriage proved to be Sir John Russell's. He came to take Miss Stuart for a drive, but she declined going out this last morning, when all the girls were going away. Indeed she was too much affected at the separation to be able to go out. Sir John therefore went away alone.

Most of the girls shed tears when they bade farewell to Miss Stuart; she also could not restrain her tears. She gave each girl, as a keep-

sake, one of those splendidly-bound books which Mary had seen.

When all the girls were gone, she retired to her own room for half an hour, and then joined Miss Allan, and Ellen, and me, in the garden. We walked there a long time. I well remember that walk; the day was lovely, and everything so gay, and yet so quiet. Miss Stuart and I walked together part of the time, at a little distance from Miss Allan and Ellen.

"Margaret," said Miss Stuart, "will you come with Mrs. Anderson to my wedding next week?"

"Oh Miss Stuart! will you let me come?"

"Yes. I want you to be a bridesmaid. Clara Russell wishes it too. She is to be my other bridesmaid. Will you like it thus, Margaret?"

"Oh Miss Stuart! Dear Miss Stuart! I shall be too happy."

"The wedding will be very quiet, and quite private; but *you* shall have plenty of cake. I will take care of that."

I laughed, and she went on.

"We shall go to Vienna for our wedding journey. Clara is to stay with you and Mrs. Anderson while we are away. You will be kind to her for my sake, at first, Margaret; will you not? and afterwards I hope you will love her for her own."

I promised readily to do my best to entertain Miss Clara.

Miss Stuart continued, "We shall return to England just a week before the school opens again, and that week I want you to spend with Clara at my new home. I should say my *old* home," she added, with a melancholy smile.

"What! Russell Lodge, at Croydon?" I inquired eagerly.

"Yes. Ah! I see Miss Allan has told you of the kind old gentleman and the little girl." She paused for a few moments, as if she were thinking of the past; and then resumed, "Well, my dear Margaret, will you come and spend a week with me at Russell Lodge?"

"Oh! dear Miss Stuart! how kind you are to me!" and I put my arm round her,—a familiarity

I had never ventured with Miss Stuart before. "There is nothing I should like more ; and I dare say Mrs. Anderson will let me go."

"She has consented already."

"How happy you will be !" cried I, with enthusiasm.

"Do not be too sure of that, Margaret," said Miss Stuart, and her expressive face had a painful expression. "No life is without sorrow. Do not misunderstand me. I am not ungrateful to God for the blessings he has lately conferred on me ; but I do not expect to have nothing but ease and pleasure all the rest of my life. For many years I have been obliged to support myself by teaching ; but I had learned to desire no other position in the world. I was useful, and some of you *loved* me. Now, a new life opens before me, and I sometimes feel as if I were too tired with labour, and too *old*, to enjoy it long. I am not strong enough to bear all this happiness. I feel now that the trials of life have weakened me."

I remained silent a little time, and then said,

with some embarrassment,—for the sentiment was Ellen's, and not my own,—“I should think that an easy life, in which you will be loved and honoured as you deserve to be, will soon make you strong and young.”

She smiled and shook her head, and said that I was a philosopher of Miss Allan's school, and that she hoped I might be a true prophetess.

In the evening Mrs. Vaughan and Lewis came to fetch Ellen and Miss Allan. The former was to travel the next day with her uncle to her home in Northumberland, and Miss Allan was to spend a few weeks with the Vaughans.

When they were gone, I wandered all over the house alone. The school-room, Grey Room, bed-rooms, dining-room, all silent and deserted. What a change in a few hours!—I was getting sad, so I turned my thoughts to other matters—my dress as bridesmaid. I had never been present at a wedding before, so it was natural that I should think a great deal of such an affair. The next day I wrote a long letter to mamma, telling her of the change in Miss Stuart's

circumstances, and of all matters connected there-with ; not omitting the important fact, that *I*, her own little Meg, was to be present at the marriage.

THE END.

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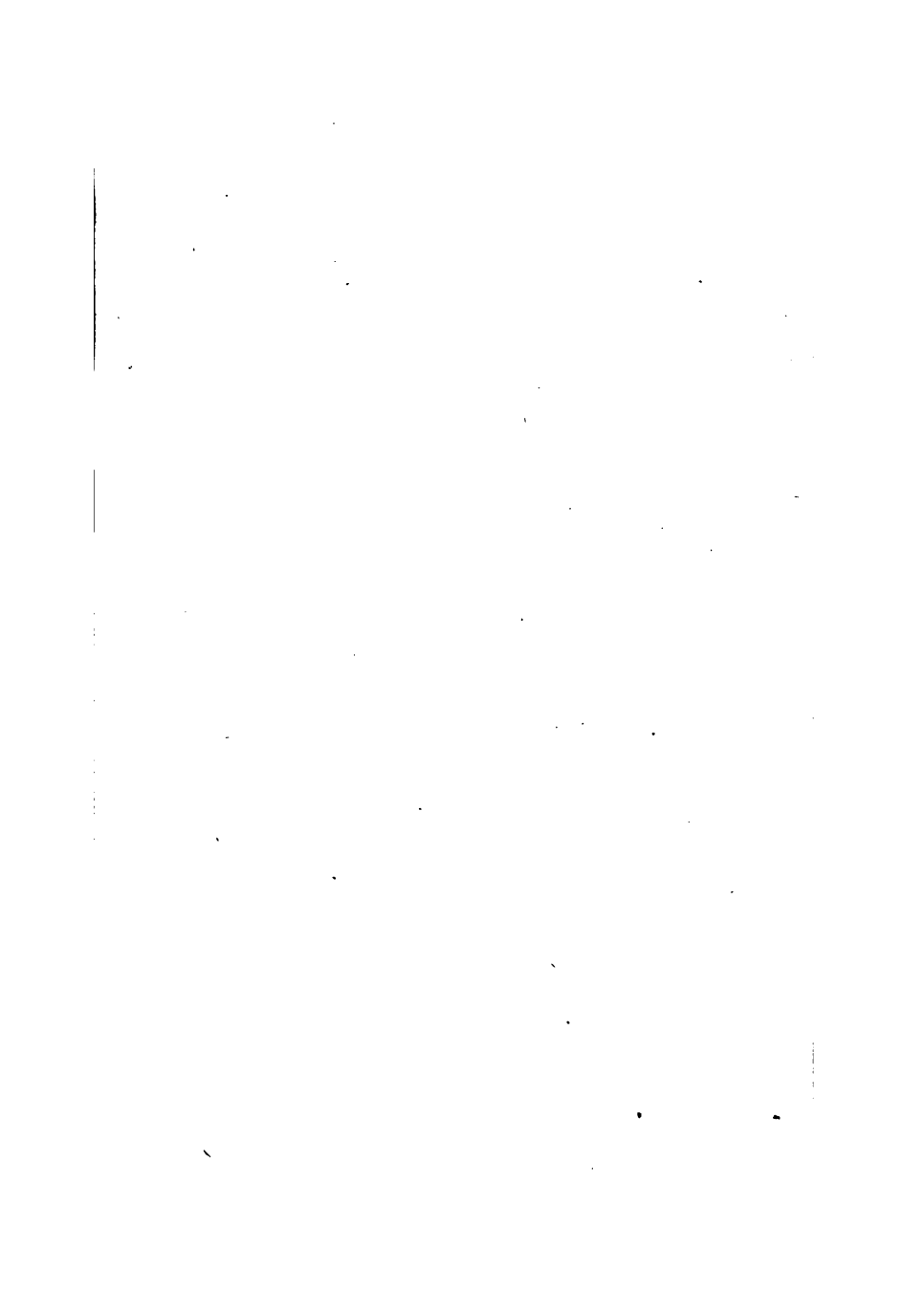
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